■ BUSINESS/B1
Japan firm plans P5-B coco facility in RP; 600,000-ha needed

■ METRO/A23
74-year-old woman caught with P5M worth of suspected Ecstasy tablets at Naia

■ NEWS/A3
Cops harass legit STL operators, complains PCSO

■ WORLD/A26
Bush orders National Guard to US-Mexico border to stop flow of illegal immigrants

## 'Da Vinci Code' for adults only, says film review body

By Bayani San Diego Jr.
Entertainment

LEONARDO DA VINCI HIMSELF WOULD'VE BEEN shocked.

A three-member committee of the Movie and Television Review and Classification Board (MTRCB) gave an R-18 rating to the controversial Hollywood film "The Da Vinci Code," which

DA VINCI, A23

email: feedback@inquirer.com.ph

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER
BALANCED NEWS, FEARLESS VIEWS

Wednesday, May 17, 2006 ★★ 8 sections / Vol. 21 / No. 150 P18 website: www.inq7.net

## No environmental clearance for ecopark, lawmaker says

By Philip C. Tubeza

LOOK WHO'S TALKING: Trying to turn the tables on critics of the controversial housing project at the La Mesa watershed area, Alfred Vargas, Eddie Lagman yesterday ac-

MEGAWORLD, A13

# 2 new slays for task force

## Journalist shot dead in ambush

By Nancy Carvajal
Metro

REPORTER ALBERT ORSOLINO often travelled with a companion. Yesterday, driving his Toyota Corolla on his way to work, he was alone. That was when the gunmen struck.

The 45-year-old reporter for the tabloid Sakal, who covered Malabanias, became the latest in the growing list of journalists murdered since 1986 when two men on a motorcycle shot and killed him near a gas station along C-4 Road in Barangay 90 Isipit, Caloocan City.

JOURNALIST, A8

YET ANOTHER JOURNALIST WRITES 20: Alma Orsolino, wife of tabloid photojournalist Albert Orsolino, is consoled by a friend after viewing the remains of her husband who was ambushed near the boundary of Malabon and Caloocan by two men on Tuesday morning.

## 5th activist leader killed in a week's time

By Yolanda Sotelo-Fuertes
PEI Northern Luzon Bureau

SAN NICOLAS, PANGASINAN—Again, the assassins were on a motorcycle. Again, there was no escaping their deadly fire.

At 10:50 a.m. yesterday, peasant leader Jose Dator, 62, and his brother Cancio, 57, were on a motorcycle on their way home when two other men riding tandem on a red Honda motorcycle fired at them at close range.

Dator, secretary general of the leftist Bagong Alyansang Makabayan, died from bullet wounds in the head and chest—the 124th red-tag leader assassinated under the Arroyo presidency and the fifth activist murdered this week.

His brother, who was driving the motorcycle, took two bullets in the back and was in critical condition.

The attack occurred a day after the Philippine National Police Task Force Usig vowed to solve the wave of killings of left-wing militants and journalists around the country.

Some 170 km south of where the Dators were ambushed and at roughly the same time, two other gunmen were on a similarly deadly mission. Also riding on a motorcycle, they shot and killed

5 MORE, A8

## RP joins 1st ever int'l tsunami drill

STO. DOMINGO, ALBAY—Although the Philippines escaped the deadly 2004 tsunami that ravaged its neighbors, the country should brace for killer waves because it lies in a geologically dangerous region and has a recent history of tsunami devastation, officials said yesterday.

The Philippines is among more than two dozen countries joining an unprecedented drill on Wednesday to test a tsunami warning system in the Pacific Ocean. A Pacific warning system has been in place since 1965, but a full ocean-wide exercise has never taken place.

RP JOINS, A16

## Senate, House OK dialogue on Cha-cha

By Juliet Labog-Javellana and Christine O. Avendaño

PRESIDENT MACAPAGAL-ARROYO yesterday warned lawmakers who would press ahead with Charter change even if it invited controversy like persuaded the two chambers of Congress to hold a dialogue on her moves to adopt the parliamentary system.

Sen. Richard Gordon, chair of the Senate committee on constitutional amendments, and his House of Representatives counterpart, Rep. Constantino Jaraula, were tasked with opening discussions on the President's move to amend the 1987 Constitution.

The agreement to hold a dialogue was reached during the Legislative-Executive Development Advisory Committee (Ledac) that Ms Arroyo convened yesterday to discuss pending priority measures with nine senior days left before Congress adjourns sine die next month.

Ms Arroyo set the tone of the Ledac meeting attended by Senate President Franklin Drilon, who went to Malacañang for the first time after he broke away from the President in July last year and called for her resignation over allegations she stole the 2004 presidential election.

"The time is now and I must press this even if it invites controversy because I am aware that we are a gathering of misrepresentations despite our disagreements," Ms Arroyo said in remarks to open the meeting. "We can only build consensus from challenge and in the marketplace of ideas."

The administration is pressing ahead with Charter change on two fronts.

It has initiated a signature campaign under the "people's initiative" mode of amending the Constitution, posing a single question on whether Filipinos agree to do away with the Senate, adopt a unicameral legislature and approve unspecified transitory provisions that will pave the way for the adoption of the parliamentary system.

Without an enabling law to support the people's initiative

SENATE, A21

## RP climbers near Everest summit

By Alcuin Papa

IF THE "MOUNTAIN GODS" ALLOW IT AND the weather cooperates, the Philippine flag will be planted today or tomorrow on the peak of Mt. Everest, the tallest mountain in the world.

Two members of the First Philippine Mt. Everest Expedition (FPMEE), Leo Oracion and Erwin "Pastor" Emata, set out from the Everest Base Camp (5,400 meters or 17,700 feet) last weekend.

Hopes are high that Oracion or Emata may be able to reach the summit in the next two days, FPMEE team leader Regie Pablo told the Inquirer yesterday.

Another climber, Ronil Garduce, has also embarked on his own quest to get to the peak

RP CLIMBERS, A14

## *Lea's daughter born in RP*

By Bayani San Diego Jr.
Entertainment

SINGER-ACTRESS LEA SALONGA, THE Tony-winning star of "Miss Saigon," gave birth to a girl at noon yesterday—three days before her due date.

Lea, who turned 35 in February, made certain that she would give birth in the Philippines. But the family requested the

LEA'S, A10

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER

WEDNESDAY, MAY 17, 2006

Second FRONTPAGE

WEATHER FORECAST

# Junk raps, Batasan 5 ask court

By Tarra V. Quismundo

THE "BATASAN 5" YESTERDAY ASKED a Makati court to dismiss the rebellion charges the Department of Justice (DOJ) filed against them last week, saying they were a revision of the same charges a judge threw out earlier.

Reps. Satur Ocampo, Teodoro Casiño and Joel Virador of Bayan Muna, Rafael Mariano of Anakpawis and Liza Maza of Gabriela asked Judge Romulo Quilala of Makati Regional Trial Court Branch 57 to dismiss the new charges filed against them and 45 others last Friday.

"It is literally refiled because it is a rehash or a substantive reenactment of the amended information that was earlier rejected by Branch 57 on evidentiary, among other reasons, of the due process rights of the accused," said the motion filed by the lawmakers' counsel, Romeo Capulong.

### 'Insufficient evidence'

The five said the prosecution's evidence was "either severely lacking or insufficient to establish probable cause."

The latest rebellion charges were filed one week after Judge Jenny Lind Aldecoa-Delorino of Makati MTC Branch 137 refused to include the five and 41 others in the rebellion case filed by the DOJ against Arroyo-ally Rep. Crispin Beltran and Int. Sr. Lawrence San Juan in connection with the attempted coup on Feb. 24.

Delorino had ruled the DOJ's amended information to include the 46 would not supplant the case against Beltran and San Juan as it hypothesized a heinous, nefarious conspiracy to topple the government going all the way back to 1986, when the Communist Party of the Philippines was established.

### New charges

The DOJ then filed new charges against the 46. Like the case against Beltran and San Juan, the charges alleged a conspiracy between rebel soldiers and communist forces, going the Batasan 5 as "legal fronts, to stage a series of uprisings against the government. Inquiring on Feb. 24 and culminating on May 1.

In their motion, the lawmakers also cited the DOJ's breach of court procedures, saying the prosecutors failed to personally testify as many witnesses, contrary to law.

"The law here, the information suffers fatal defects and should be dismissed outright; the failure to comply with the mandatory requirements of (the rules on criminal procedure) ... On its face the information is null and void for failure to comply with the rules," the Batasan 5 said.

MAGDALO TRIAL

## *Another witness links Gringo, but...*

By Tarra V. Quismundo

HANDCUFFED: Lt. Lawrence San Juan arrives at the Makati City court. INQ

A NAVY LIEUTENANT TESTIFied yesterday that former Sen. Gregorio "Gringo" Honasan spoke to rescue junior officers in at least two meetings leading up to the failed Oakwood mutiny in 2003 but said Honasan was no discussion of violence or how to implement the former military rebel turned senator's "National Recovery Program."

"I was comforted by his reply because he told the attendees that there would be no violence," Martinez added. "He even joked, 'I ain't engage in another coup d'etat or my wife will surely kill me'... The attendees all laughed."

Martinez was the 38th witness presented by the prosecution at the Makati trial of 31 junior military officers accused of coup d'etat for their involvement in the short-lived July 27 Oakwood mutiny in Makati.

The lieutenant commander with those of Marine Capt. Nicholas Belmas and Army Capt. Manuel Dorian Sarmiento who told the court earlier that the use of violence in toppling the government was discussed during a June 6, 2003 meeting between Honasan and junior officers.

The prosecution said the apparent discrepancy in the testimonies showed how Honasan and the other alleged meeting leaders used rhetoric in their recruitment as proved by the change in tenor at the meeting attended by Dalusan and Reyes after two months later.

But the defense had a different version, saying the lieutenant's testimonies were in no haste.

"The witness just told the truth," defense lawyer Theodore Te flesh told reporters. "There was no talk of violence, of a takeover. We should accept the witness' statement in face value. I think the prosecution added its own conclusion on what (the witness) had said."

Martinez said he was conducting social reconnaissance/photography over Camp Aguinaldo at the time of the failed mutiny. After the takeover, he was detained by the military for two weeks as his name appeared on their records. He disclosure found in Oakwood after the mutiny. Bautista said the files contained a list of recruits for the takeover.

Honasan and six others were charged with rebellion in the same case but February all but one of them are at large and have not been arraigned.

# Shun DOJ advice, sychophants, GMA told

By Philip C. Tubeza

AMID PRESIDENT MACAPAGAL-ARROYO needed independent-minded legal advisers not sycophants, ex-solicitor general Antonio Nachura said yesterday urged Malacañang not to rely too much on the Department of Justice which had taken the "path of legal exhilaration and political rigidity."

Celso Roy, Antonio Carpio, chair of the Ukraine commissioner on foreign affairs, also said the rebellion charges against the "Batasan 5" should be dropped since they were assuming the already tense relations between Congress and the Palace.

"There are strange charges and reminiscent of Martial Law days," Carpio said in a statement, referring to the late dictator Ferdinand Marcos.

"I mirror endorsement for all the DOJ's relentless pursuit of the Batasan 5. Would its actions foster unity in government? Should the same engender solidarity and improvement in governance? I am not even sure it is a path to benefit from this legal adventurism," he said.

The Batasan 5—Rep. Satur Ocampo and members of Congress who escaped arrest after a court refused to charge them with rebellion—have been charged anew by the DOJ in connection with the attempted coup against the administration last Feb. 24.

Ocampo said the House will always be expected to grant its protective shield to the misdirected legislators and Speaker [Jose] de Venecia [could] shower the prosecutors [with] praises.

De Venecia told reporters in Baguio city in the House until a Makati court ruled against including them in the rebellion case the government had filed against another party-list member of Congress, Rep. Crispin Beltran, and rebel soldier 1st Lt. Lawrence San Juan.

"Pursuing the case as ordered [by the court] would put the others in the already tense relations between the legislature and the executive branch," Ocampo said.

Ocampo urged Malacañang to refrain from Solicitor General Antonio Nachura and legal luminaries in the administration of the DOJ, saying they would prevent "another serious loss in its legal battles and policy advocacy such as what happened in the cases of EO 464, Proclamation 1017 and [the subsequent] preemptive assassination policy against alleged protesters."

The Supreme Court recently ruled against the Palace on several provisions of Executive Order No. 464, which banned government officials from attending congressional inquiries; Presidential Proclamation No. 1017, which declared the country under a state of emergency, and the CPR, which banned street protests.

"Malacañang had to touch base and associate with legal expertise who can help it will the President that a legal stand, point is wrong and who can call a spade a spade," Ocampo said.

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# Cops harassing legit STL operators, PCSO chief complains

By Norman Bordadora

THE PHILIPPINE CHARITY Sweepstakes Office yesterday said its small town lottery operations are being hampered by policemen preserving illegal "jueteng" operations.

PCSO chair Sergio Valencia said in a news conference that his office has received reports that STL operators are being harassed by police officers preserving jueteng in discourage legal competition in the illegal numbers game.

Valencia didn't name names but said that the policemen involved may be slapped with administrative and criminal charges in Quezon and Batangas.

"Initial reports submitted to our police identify several policemen in partnership with local gambling lords as those responsible for the emergence of jueteng," Valencia said.

Valencia said that the allegedly unscrupulous policemen have resorted to the harassment of STL operators and their legitimate employees in a bid to discourage them from operating in the provinces.

The PCSO reported that it has already installed more than P2 million to the local police forces in the areas where STL has operated since mid-February.

"We will not hesitate to unmask these people and file criminal as well as administrative charges against them," Valencia said.

The STL has so far been launched in seven areas for test runs. These areas include Quezon, Batanes, Angeles City in Pampanga, Quezon City, Occidental Mindoro, Pampanga, Laguna and Bulacan.


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# Gov't starts valuation of Hacienda Luisita

By Blencha S. Rivera

HOW MUCH IS HACIENDA LUISITA worth?

A government team is to start an onsite inspection of the sugar estate today to determine the value of the hacienda, which the farmers-beneficiaries have decided to parcel out to the farm workers.

Agrarian Reform Undersecretary Jesus Jose Nieto A. estimated that only around 4,000 hectares of the 4,915-ha estate owned by the family of former President Corazon Aquino would be distributed to the farm hands after subtracting the area occupied by roads, canals and houses.

Nieto made the announcement of the valuation during meetings with the two groups of Luisita workers who came to the DAR central office yesterday.

The only, the DAR has appealed to the would-be beneficiaries batting for individual land titles not to give up their land rights in exchange for quick cash.

"Don't sell them to the rich (landowners) and then later on, come to us for another agrarian reform," Nieto said, addressing members of the farm workers' organization Reform Movement Luisita (RAM).

He said the government was taking great pains to acquire the land, which remained under the control of the Cojuangcos for 15 years through a stock distribution option under the Land Reform Law. The estate's tenants have been demanding that the hacienda be parceled out to them under the government's land reform program for the past 47 years.

On DAR's recommendation, the Presidential Agrarian Reform Council revoked last year the stock scheme in effect in Luisita, paving the way for the distribution of the sugar land to its farm workers. The stock scheme had made the farmers part owners of the estate since 1989.

A team composed of representatives from the Land Bank of the Philippines, the DAR and the Department of Agriculture would visit the 10 barangays that comprise Luisita from May 17 to 19.

The Aksyon ng mga Manggagawang Bukid ng Asyenda Luisita (AMBALA) said the Land Bank should peg the value of Hacienda Luisita to its value in 1989 when the stock distribution scheme was implemented under a law enacted during the administration of President Aquino.

"The land is not free; farmers still pay for it, and they cannot afford to pay so much for the hacienda, which some say can even reach up to P2 million per hectare," AMBALA legal counsel Jobert Pahilanda said.

The Hacienda Luisita Inc., manager of the estate, had even broken that it wanted P1 million per hectare as compensation for the hacienda, the same amount for which it sold 77 hectares of the hacienda to the Subic Conservation Development Authority for an expressway.

Nieto had said earlier that negotiations with landowners would be done on a case-to-case basis.

Nieto said in his discussion with the farmers that the government would not force landowners to sell their lands covered by the Comprehensive Agrarian Reform Program (CARP) for less than P500,000 and P800,000 per hectare.

When the Land Bank comes up with its valuation, it will be submitted to the landowner for approval.

"If the landowner rejects the value, then it becomes a question of voluntary land ownership," he said.

The DAR stands put on its decision to issue a collective certificate of land ownership to the Luisita farm workers by next month to ensure that the title would be immediately transferred to the landowner.

"This is a compromise process. We will proceed with awarding individual titles if that is what the majority (of farmers) will want," he said.

FRFM members yesterday submitted a petition signed by 1,183 farm workers asking individual titles for its members when the collective title is issued.

With Gerwin M. del Rosario


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05 - Apr. 7, 2006



**THE DAILY GOSPEL**

Wednesday, May 17, 2006
Ada Nitsch of Easton

1st Reading: Acts 15:1-6
Gospel: John 15:1-8

Jesus said to his disciples, "I am the true vine and my Father is the vinegrower. If any of my branches does not bear fruit, he breaks it off, and he prunes every branch that does bear fruit, that it may bear even more fruit.

"You are already made clean by the word I have spoken to you. Live in me as I live in you. The branch cannot bear fruit by itself but has to remain part of the vine; so neither can you if you don't remain in me.

"I am the vine and you are the branches. As long as you remain in me and I in you, you will bear much fruit; but apart from me you can do nothing. Whoever does not remain in me is thrown away as they do with branches and they wither. They are gathered and thrown into the fire and burned.

"If you remain in me and my words in you, you may ask whatever you want and it will be given to you. My Father is glorified when you bear much fruit; it is then that you become my disciples."

The Gospel of the morning homily according to the old law comes up on the preaching in the Catholic services. St. Paul and Barnabas return to the church to tell the elders the story of their travels and the conversions they brought to God. But they also recount that those who were preaching Judaism as a requisite were causing dissension. The Church decides to convene and look into the matter. Jesus speaks of the vine and the branches that must receive, digest from Jesus there is no life, nothing. Concentration on Jesus, no room other traditions to what is primary.


## Corrections

IN THE MAY 9 ISSUE, A STORY ON PAGE A12—"TI PALACE PENtoking Enrites et al."—misstated the name of the government body that oversees the secretary's bureaucracy. The government body is the Career Executive Service Board (CESB)—not the Career Service Executive Board (CSEB). The same mistake appeared in the May 11 editorial, "Unwilled Plus."

* * *

IN THE MAY 9 ISSUE, A LETTER TO THE EDITOR ON PAGE A12—"Why ethanol first, when we already are overflowing with it nowadays?"—misstated the name of Fortunato de la Peña Enterprise, a nongovernment organization. The NGO's name is "Alternative Law Groups, Inc."—not "Always Live Your Concern!"

* * *

*Readers may send their requests for corrections, clarifications or queries in writing to the Top Desk, Philippine Daily Inquirer, PCI Building, Chino Roces Avenue corner Makati-ala Street, Makati City, fax No. 897-67-89/90, e-mail address: ask-desk@inquirer.com.ph.*

*Clarifications about lack of full name or identities may be sent to Senior Editor Trixie Cruz-Angeles, e-mail address: trixie@inquirer.com.ph or fax No. 897-67-89/90, Attn: Reader's Advocate; tel. phone number is 897-5000 Local 8624.*

# Senators see tough battle over budget

By TJ Burgonio

SENATORS, WHO HAD VOWED TO APPROVE the P1.353-trillion proposed budget for 2006 in three weeks, see a fierce debate, perhaps even an impasse, at the bicameral conference because they plan to overhaul the bill passed by the House of Representatives.

"I'm worried that there will be a huge difference between what the Senate will pass and what the House has approved. We can't say if there will be an agreement in the bicameral conference," Sen. Ahmad Villar Jr. said yesterday.

"Our plan is to cure the priorities right in this budget passed by the House. We will prioritize the funds, and there will be major amendments," he added.

Villar, chair of the Senate committee on finance, said that senators intended to scrutinize "lump sum appropriations" in the budget and transfer them to sectors that badly need funds, such as education and health.

Senate Minority Leader Aquilino Pimentel Jr. had said opposition senators planned to closely examine funds he branded as "pork-barrel in nature," including the P6.billion Educational Assistance Fund and the P3-billion Kalayaan Barangay Program Fund. Both are earmarked for local government units.

The funds should be diverted to the Department of Science and Technology, one of the agencies getting the least priority in budget allocation, but which could help the government develop technology for tapping alternative sources of energy, he said.

### Working overtime

Villar said he had asked the senators to submit their proposed amendments to the House budget measure, stating those would be incorporated in his committee's report to be presented on the floor next week.

"This recommendation will take into consideration all of the opinions and recommendations of the senators," he said.

The Senate expects to pass the measure on May 26 and forthwith hold the bicameral conference with congressmen.

After a session Monday afternoon, the senators agreed to work overtime and hold sessions five days a week, instead of the regular three days, to hasten the passage of the budget and six other priority bills.

After months of delay, the House approved a P1.06-trillion budget on April 4, a day before Congress took a break for the Holy Week. The budget is normally transmitted to the Senate by mid-November and passed to year's end.

Other than the budget measure, administration bets, John Arroyo admitted that the Senate would be able to approve the priority bills during its marathon session until the second week of June.

"It's very ambitious to pass seven bills. I don't know why they overloaded it," he said, pointing out that only three bills could be passed before adjournment. "The budget will occupy most of it (sessions), and most of (how bills are considered) is unsure."

Apart from the General Appropriations Act, the senators agreed to give priority to the proposed anti-spy, to establish a credit information system, the Electric Power Industry Reform Act, the biofuels program bill, the anti-terror bill, the automated election bill and the income tax relief bill.

# Back-to-School

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For BTT NCR Permit No. 0804, Series of 2008

# Foes come together for juvenile justice

By Christine O. Avendaño

SETTING ASIDE THEIR DIFFERENCES for a few minutes, political foes members came together to witness the signing into law of a measure that aims to reform the justice system for juvenile offenders or "children in conflict with the law."

In a simple ceremony in Malacañang, President Macapagal-Arroyo signed into law the Juvenile Justice and Welfare Act of 2006, or Republic Act No. 9344, and said it was a "fitting prelude" to the Legislative-Executive Development Advisory Council meeting this week to convene immediately after noon.

"It shows that the executive-legislative working together is as good as ever when it comes to our future generations," said the President in a statement she read at the initial meeting.

Both the signing of the new law and the Lenten morning were attended by Senate President Franklin Drilon and Senate Majority Leader Francis Pangilinan, further allies of President Arroyo who have become among her staunchest critics, and other members of the Senate, which has collided with Malacañang recently over several issues, probably the proposal to abolish the bicameral or the way to a unicameral parliamentary form of government.

Answering the signing ceremony, Malacañang praised the members of Congress for rushing up with the President's law that would "protect children in conflict with the law from abuse and exploitation."

"The executive branch will extend its fullest support to its implementation as we pursue reforms in our penal system in cooperation with local governmental units," said Press Secretary Ignacio Bunye in a statement.

Under the new law, a Juvenile Justice and Welfare System will be created to be supervised by the Department of Justice.

The new body will assist in the review and rationing of existing policies and regulations and in the formulation of new ones relating to juvenile justice and welfare.

The law requires the development of a comprehensive juvenile intervention program in the local government units from the barangay to the provincial levels.

It also states how the authorities should treat children aged 15 and below when they are taken into custody and the procedures to follow when they are investigated.

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# Journalist shot dead . . .

From page A1

Ordoñez was on his way to the Palace when he was ambushed.

An employee of the Social Security System, identified as Aniceto Ordoñez, was wounded when the van hit by a stray bullet in the right leg, said PO2 Pew Sino.

Clemente was rushed to her duty inside her office in the SSS Malolos branch where he holds the post Sec.

The gunmen fled after staging operations from the Department of Transportation and Communication in Lolomboy, police said.

The DOTC men were to the area at the time reportedly on a confidential operation.

"The DOTC operatives fled to the escaping suspect and reportedly wounded one of them," Sino said.

Another being a journalist, Ordoñez was an official of his barangay and president of the Lapu Homeowners Association. The lead scene from his house at Area D Lupac, Tumana, Malabon, where he was shot.

Ordoñez was the 78th member of the media to be killed violently since the restoration of democracy in the country in 1986, according to records of the National Union of Journalists of the Philippines (NUJP).

The bayonet-slay hasn't as reports from various sources, including NUJP put the death count at 125.

We gathered that he used to travel with someone and it was the first time that he travelled alone in his car," Sino said.

He said the assailants, who might have been waiting for Ordoñez to be alone, apparently were making inside his car when they opened his front door range.

"Based on the limited glan were close on the driver's side and the location of the bullet holes, they presumed he was the one," Sino said.

The assailants abandoned their motorcycle, with license plate number UK 6330, and took over a passing white FX Tamaraw being driven by one Manuelito Navarro. The FX was later found abandoned along Road 10.

Found in the vehicle were a black sweater printed with the word "Guardians," a grey shirt that said "Compliments of Mayor Pel of Bamanohin, Cavite" on it and a face towel.

Ordoñez died from a bare gunshot wound in the abdomen.

A cousin of Ordoñez's, Hyatlin Maldeclaro, said the journalist and his wife Aileen had five children, all of them still in grade school.

Called "Bad" by his relatives, Ordoñez had helped residents in his neighborhood acquire the land on which they had been considered squatters before, Maldeclaro said.

He said Ordoñez was on his last term as a barangay councilor and had always been the object of envy of some residents, who also wanted to become leaders in their area.

The Malacañang Press Corps condemned the murders.

MPC president Jerile Magkilang said: "We hope that they [the authorities] will put a final stop to the unresolved killings and bring justice to [the] journalists and other members."

MPC said Ordoñez "will be fondly remembered as one of those who refused to be silenced in upholding the principles of freedom of the press." With a report from Aracelis Papa

# 2 new slays for task force

From page A1

tabloid reporter Albert Ordoñez in Calamba City. (Story at left.)

The manner in which the killings were carried out—assassins on motorcycles—bore similarities to the murders of militants who involving motorcycle-riding gunmen during the years 1986-88, leftist groups said.

Some of the officials in the Armed Forces in the three areas now serving President Macapagal-Arroyo, they said.

Several of the most recent killings of activists were also carried out by armed men on motorcycles.

The killers of Denia were armed with a .45-cal. automatic pistol and had called the fourteen before shooting their victim using a village road, Chief Insp. Sidrach Rotanda said.

"We were allowed a role-play and were following them but they were too fast," said Lanila Dasco, daughter of Garcia, who was with other relatives at the time of the shooting.

"Nonetheless in Camarines, we heard there and not even saw the motorcycle [the suspects were riding] going back to the town proper," Lanila said.

"Then we saw my father and my uncle already lying on the road."

## Don't blame GMA

Lanila said the killers and Hontiveros motorcycle had been seen around the village the past several days.

Militants have blamed the killings of activists on the military which, in turn, said the murderers could be the result of factional violence among leftist groups.

Dasco was chair of the farmers' group Timpuyog ti Mamalakas a Mangpapawid ti Agno (Timamma), which has been opposing the operation of the San Roque multipurpose dam project at the Pangasinan-Benguet border.

The group has also been working for just compensation for the land owners displaced by the dam.

Dasco had led Timamma's antigovernment rallies.

## Leftist purges

Malacañang said it was unfair to put the blame on Mr Arroyo.

"I think these things are beyond the control of the President. I don't think it's proper to think that just because a militant has been killed, the government had something to do with it," Executive Secretary Eduardo Ermita told reporters.

Ermita disputed claims that the political killings were instigated by a government crackdown on leftists.

"I don't see it. In my long experience in government and the military, government forces have always been blamed whenever an alleged leftist element dies. But this has been rarely proved so we should stop saying there is a pattern," said Ermita.

## No suspects

He said that if there were purges in the communist ranks, these "were being undertaken by the left in reaction to themselves."

Ermita cited Romulo Kintanar, Filemon "Popoy" Lagman and Dante Tinio as examples of leftists killed by their comrades, or former comrades.

"We have no suspects but we believe that Mr [Ernesto] Maceda is linked to the issues that he fought for which concerned the welfare of the farmers and the unfulfilled promises of the government to them effected by the dam," said Fe Tan Sevallejos, chair of Bayan-Bagumbayan.

In Barangay, police have produced an artist's sketch of one of the two killers of Bayan Mina executive Diosdado Sevilla, who was gunned down in the City of San Fernando on Saturday.

The killer was between 28 and 33 years old, between 5'7" and 5'9" tall and of heavy build, police said, adding that the sketch did not match the photographs of criminals in the police files.

## Challenge to PNP

"It's as if we're being challenged," police spokesperson Senior Supt. Samuel Pagdilao said of the wave of Denia's assassination, which several were after the government created Task Force Usig to look into the killings of political activists, journalists, politicians and other civil activists.

"But this will not dampen the resolution of the task force to get to the bottom of these killings," he added.

The task force has tallied 123 killings of activists under the previous presidency and said that in 43 of those cases, the military or paramilitary units were the suspects. Thirteen other deaths were believed to be the result of purges within the leftist ranks, it said.

The Inquirer has recorded 123 deaths during the five-year period.

## Veiled threat

Home Deputy Minority Leader Satur Ocampo said he said the other four members of the "Satanic 5" party-list lawmakers would be the next targets of "death squads" killing political militants.

"When you look at it, logically we're targets of physical elimination," said Ocampo.

He said Maj. Gen. Justo Pal-parane, commander of the 7th Army Infantry Division, had actually issued a "veiled threat to our lives by classifying us as enemies of the state."

Ocampo called for an independent commission to be headed by a retired justice and to include persons of known probity as investigators of the killings.

Replying to an e-mailed query, Luis Jalandoni, chair of the negotiating panel of the communist-led umbrella group National Democratic Front, noted that many of the killings had been committed by gunmen on motorcycles.

## NPA punishment

"Such motorcycle-riding assassins are common in the Philippines," Jalandoni said from the Netherlands.

Communist spokesperson Gregorio "Ka Roger" Rosal vowed that New People's Army rebels would punish the military units concerned and the officials behind the series of murders.

In a statement, Rosal said the CPP condemned in "strongest military terms and outrage" the gruesome deeds that the number of activists were part of "internal purging" inside the movement.

He smelled government claims it had discovered another mass grave of alleged NPA mass graves." Rosal said.

"To prop up their payout allibi, the AFP is once again busy loading their collection of old skeletons from their hidings, dumping them into new excavations and converting these as so-called NPA mass graves," Rosal said.

## Appeal from church

CPP officials owned up to killing hundreds of members suspected of being government agents during their "internal cleansing" in the 1980s. Perpetrators of the cleansing were eventually punished, according to the CPP.

The National Council of Churches in the Philippines and the Prevention of Church People's Response also called on the to stop the killings of militant pastor Jovitas Tenamoleones in Misamis Occidental and of other church people in Davao City.

Bishop Rene Fumanday, NCCP secretary general, urged the to "to act and act swiftly to giving justice" to the victims. With reports from Lolgo A. del Puerto, Michael Lim Ubac and Bonz Magsaysay in Manila, Sherry Dejan, PDI Central Luzon Desk; Beatrice Cabico, PDI Northern Luzon Bureau; Phillie T. Machai Jr. and Marlon Ramos, PDI Southern Luzon Bureau; Michael J. Aurelio, Jeffrey M. Tupas and Judy Quiroz, PDI Mindanao Bureau; and Michelle Manipis

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# Gov't elated by 1st major victory in tax credit scam

MALACAÑANG YESterday cheered its first major victory in the government's seven-year battle to prosecute a multibillion tax credit scam, saying that this would boost government efforts to clamp down on tax fraud.

"It's a victory for the government and we are happy about the resolution of the case. The tax credit purchasers will not only involve Shell but also other companies that availed themselves of the tax credit in the past," said Presidential Chief of Staff Michael Defensor.

The Court of Appeals reversed a previous ruling and ordered Pilipinas Shell Petroleum Corp. to pay the government P176 million in tax liabilities for using tax credit certificates that were fraudulently secured to offset its liabilities in 1998.

The TCCs were acquired from tourism Chinglaw where garment companies issued bogus tax credit certificates or instruments that entitle bearer to a refund of taxes. The tax credit certificates can be sold to another company to offset its own liabilities.

"The bottom line here is that while we achieved victory we have to ensure that nothing like this will be repeated in the future," Defensor said in an interview.

There were cases...one against Shell and two others against Petron Corp.... are still pending in court.

A presidential task force was formed in 1999 to investigate the scam tagged one of Chinglaw's then for obtaining around P1.35 billion in tax credit certificates from 1994 to 1997 despite a 1995 closure order issued by the Department of Environment and Natural Resources. The government issues tax credit certificates

## Cherish houses, cops told

NOTING THE DIFFICULTIES that policemen take in carrying out their duties, Vice President Noli de Castro yesterday urged them to cherish "with the same fervor" the housing privilege given them by the government and the private sector represented by the Gawad Kalinga.

De Castro, chair of the Housing and Urban Development Coordinating Council, made the pitch during the launching of the Pride Kalinga Mandaluyong Pilot Housing Project in Camp Mandaluyong in Taguig City.

He said that while government was prioritizing the housing needs of the informal settlers as those living along the right-of-way of the PNR North and South lines, the housing sector was also focusing on the needs of the government sector, particularly the low-salaried employees.

Under the Interministerial Housing Program of the government, grocery is given to the members, soldiers, policemen, and GOCC employees.

Cynthia D. Baluyo

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# RP joins unprecedented drill on tsunami evacuation

From page A1

"It's important always to be prepared, that we do not expose people to hazards of disastrous events," said Renato Solidum Jr., head of the Philippine Institute of Volcanology and Seismology (Phivolcs), which monitors volcanic eruptions, earthquakes and tsunamis.

"That's better than having to do a search and rescue later," Solidum said.

During the drill early Wednesday, the Pacific Tsunami Warning Center in Hawaii will send out warnings about sneak earthquakes off the coasts of Luzon and Chile powerful enough to set off a tsunami across the vast ocean.

Governments of the participating countries will then see how fast they receive the warnings and how rapidly they can relay it to their domestic emergency alert systems.

## Mock evacuation

While other countries will stop at that, the Philippines will stage an evacuation of residents in the tiny fishing coastal village of Bolinao in Santo Domingo, Albay, 340 kilometers south of Manila.

Isolated by mountains and the sea, normally laid-back Bolinao was a beehive of activity on Tuesday as Phivolcs personnel installed roadside metal signs pointing the way to safety during the drill.

Hugo Abundo announced the "first-ever trans-Pacific tsunami drill" called "Exercise Pacific Wave 2006." Children milled around, giggling at outsiders and journalists.

## So happy

"We're so happy some people are advising us how to deal with such a disaster. I won't be at ease even if it does happen," said Justita Tinguio, a 54-year-old housewife.

Simplicia Salmio, a 74-year-old retired fisherman with 11 children, understands the urgency of the drill and has been sending family lately to be able to join the mock evacuation despite his arthritis.

Salmio said he sees how a powerful typhoon brought walled tsunami crashing on Bolinao, killing 13 villagers in the early 1950s.

"I don't want to see that scene again. There were so many dead people and people lashed to hillsides," he said as he stood by the sun-splashed Albay Gulf, its waves gently slapping the shore.

## Lifesaving

"I know we're doing a lifesaving exercise, but I still feel anxious," he added.

Bolinao, sandwiched between the Albay Gulf and the Philippine Sea, is often lashed by typhoons and has been hit by landslide and quake. Even the deadly Mayon Volcano

A narrow road leading to the village was partly blocked by landslides from a storm last week. Despite lashing dangers, there is no police station, hospital, fire station or telephone lines. Some villagers rely on mobile phones or simply rush to a town 9 km away should predictable during an emergency.

While the villagers are encouraged to typhoons and volcanic eruptions, barely anyone was aware Bolinao could be hit by a tsunami until Thursday officials explained the nature of the mission drill, according to Jose Jeanie of Phivolcs.

## Foreign observer

Ajith Perananderra, a meteorologist from Sri Lanka and one of the foreign officials observing the drill, said he traveled to the village to learn something that could be applied to his own country.

When pandemonium hammered there was no early warning system when the 2004 tsunami struck Sri Lanka, killing about 29,000 people and damaging 40,000 houses.

"If there was a warning system during that time, we would have rescued a lot of people," he told The Associated Press.

An archipelago of more than 7,000 islands, the Philippines is flanked by the Pacific Ocean to the east and the South China Sea to the west with undersea trenches—potential quake triggers—running alongside its east and west coasts.

## 40 tsunamis

The Philippines has been struck by about 40 tsunami in the past 400 years, Solidum said.

A 7.9-magnitude quake generated tsunami waves in the Moro Gulf in Mindanao in 1976, killing more than 3,700 people. Another powerful earthquake set off by a local fault whipped up killer waves that killed 78 people on the island of Mindoro in 1994. *Reports from AP and Edgar Allyn, PDI South-Luzon Bureau*

**FOR THE FIRST TIME,** a tsunami drill with 24 countries participating will involve running a warning system in the Pacific Ocean which has been in place since 1965 but had not been tested in an ocean-wide exercise. A warning sign is set up in the far-flung coastal village of Bolinao, Santo Domingo, Albay. —


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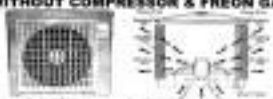

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# RP climbers near Everest summit

Front page A1

and would have reached Camp 2 (6,400 meters or 21,000 feet) at press time, according to his local contacts.

In making the final assault, Gardeco's exposure to conditions like weather as well as altitude in Mt. Everest climbing parlance as whether "the mountain gods are showing us the way to the summit."

## 14 approaches

Gardeco left Base Camp on Sunday and should be in Camp 2 today or tomorrow. He will rest another day to reach Camp 4.

"Hirap talaga sa. Wala nang kahoso. Sa takot na dapat 20's all anyone go. Those will be us turning back. It should be the summit now," Gardeco was quoted as telling his contacts.

The Filipino climbers are taking the Hillary or Southeast Ridge Route, one of the more popular routes to the top. One of the great dangers there is to find the summit, as the Rhondas to fall.

## Pushing on

Among the 14 other approaches are the Southwest Face Route, the Southeast Face and the East in Kangshung Face. The first recorded expeditions and attempts to reach the peak were made by British teams using the north approach in the 1920s.

Pablo said that Gardeco reached Camp 4 (8,000 m or 26,000 ft) yesterday afternoon. Shimla time, and that Gardeco met at Camp 3 (8,300 m or 27,370 ft).

"There are no more genuine forecasts in the next two days. So while the weather is good and the climbers are feeling fine, they are pushing on," Pablo said.

"But there are no assurances in mountaineering," he said, adding that in the case of Gardeco, Camp 4 was "the point of no return."

"If the weather holds, Gardeco will rest for a few hours and leave tonight [Tuesday] for the summit at around 10 p.m. Manila time," Pablo said.

He said the firing of signal from the flat-cone, an area past Camp 4, as the summit would have been finished by the time Gardeco neared his final leg of the climb.

Camp 4 is also known as Death Zone. Oxygen deprivation caused by high altitude, exhaustion start to take its toll on climbers

## Death Zone

Camp 4 is also known as the Death Zone, where oxygen deprivation caused by the high altitude and physical and mental exhaustion start to take its toll on the climbers.

From their respective camps, the climbers will need to bring at least one oxygen tank up to the summit.

Oxygen deprivation poses profound danger because it hampers mental decision-making, among other things. As "Into Thin Air," his account of an ill-fated expedition in 1996, where at least 12 of his fellow climbers died in a storm, Jon Krakauer recalled standing at the peak and not being able to summon the energy to care as he "stared absently at the vast sweep of earth below." More than 29,000 feet "up in the stratosphere," he wrote, "there was so little oxygen reaching my brain that my rational capacity was that of a slow child."

## Final push from Camp 4

Once climbers reach Camp 4, they will rest for only a few hours and then start their final push at around midnight to try to reach the summit in the morning.

This will allow climbers to begin their descent in the afternoon because descending at night is perilous.

## Setting records

The PMSE had originally scheduled its Everest climb next year.

But at around the time Gardeco left for Nepal in March, the PMSE decided to send its two strongest climbers, Oracion and Estrada, only to reach the peak this year as part of "two simultaneous climbs" for the 2007 attempt.

In August of last year, Oracion and Estrada made it to the top of Mt. Shishapangma (8,046 ft) in the Himalayan range and set the record for the highest altitude reached by a Filipino.

That record was broken a month later when Gardeco reached the peak of Mt. Cho-Oyu (26,906 ft), the sixth highest mountain in the world.

The PMSE is being supported by ABS-CBN, while Gardeco is being backed by steel network GMA 7.

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# Honor deal, Drilon urged

MAGAGAWANG IMAPEKTO RITO THE leadership fray at the Senate as it urged Senator Ferdinan "Franklin" Drilon to honor his "gentlemen's agreement" and yield his post to Sen. Manuel "Villar Jr.

Presidential Chief of Staff Michael Defensor said that what Drilon would do with the gentlemen's agreement he struck with Villar in 2004 would "speak a lot about the kind of person he is."

"Honoring a gentlemen's agreement will determine what kind of politician character Drilon has. (If he breaks it), it will cast doubts on how he will conduct things in the future," said Defensor in an interview with the Inquirer.

Villar said that he expected Drilon to honor the **gentlemen's agreement they reached two years ago to allow the latter to become senate president.** The two agreed on a power-sharing deal to avert a messy power play at the Senate.

Drilon has declared that he would turn over his post to Villar by July if the billionaire and **senator developer would be able to muster** the votes of the Senate majority.


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## *New papal nuncio arrives*

By Nikko Dizon

ARCHBISHOP EDMUND C. VILORIA, THE new papal nuncio, yesterday said he would be working closely with leaders of the Catholic Church in shepherding their flock.

The Philippines has the biggest Catholic population in Asia.

Filoni, the Holy See's new ambassador to the Philippines, arrived yesterday at the Ninoy Aquino International Airport (Nia) at 3:30 p.m. via Thai Airways flight TG-629.

Among those who welcomed Filoni were Manila Archbishop Gaudencio Cardinal Rosales, Fr. Jaime Bautista, executive secretary of the National Office of the Mass Media, and officials of the Department of Foreign Affairs and the airport authority.

An apostolic nuncio, Filoni, 60, represents Pope Benedict XVI.

MONEY LAUNDERING

# DOJ to summon SMC, bank execs to probe

By Armand N. Nocum, Margaux Ortiz and Christine O. Avendaño

THE DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE WILL invite top officials of San Miguel Corp. and United Coconut Planters Bank as well as alleged cronies of ousted President Joseph Estrada to shed light on allegations of money-laundering made by a former beauty queen.

Justice Secretary Raul Gonzalez said those to be invited include SMC president Ramon Ang, former UCPB president Lorraine Tan, current UCPB chief executive officer Antonino Aliwalas and vice president Alfredo Ramos and Salud Bautista Jr., and alleged Estrada cronies Jaime Dichaves, Jimmy Bocobo and Robert Sobrepeña.

"These are [other] people mentioned who could be invited," said Gonzalez, referring to the recent news report in the Manila Standard Today that named US-based former beauty queen Joelle Mark Herrera Pelaez as spending Estrada and the others of opening a bank account in her name without her permission allegedly to launder money.

The invitation, Gonzalez said, would be for the purpose of a "true fullstop" against those cited in the report which "mentioned a P500 million in public funds" and transactions conducted in a "public bank."

Pelaez, second runner-up in the 1995 Binibining Pilipinas beauty contest who now lives in Los Angeles, said she discovered that an account was opened in United Coconut Planters Bank in her name but the transactions, in the millions of pesos, were not hers.

She said the transactions involved treasury vouchers and the acquisition and sale of stocks and bonds.

She said she had filed a P500-million lawsuit against those who used her name and forged her signatures on the transactions.

Gonzalez said yesterday he had asked the National Bureau of Investigation to coordinate with the Anti-Money Laundering Council in investigating the matter.

For his part, NBI Acting Director Nestor Mantaring yesterday ordered it to investigate the report that Estrada and the many have been involved in the laundering of funds that may have been part of the "missing" P1.2-billion Jose Velarde account through the bank account in Pelaez's name.

"I have left it to Interpol to decide whom to interview first among the accused based in the country," Mantaring told reporters in an interview.

Mantaring said he had also ordered the NBI Anti-Fraud and Computer Crimes Division to coordinate with the Anti-Money Laundering Council in the case.

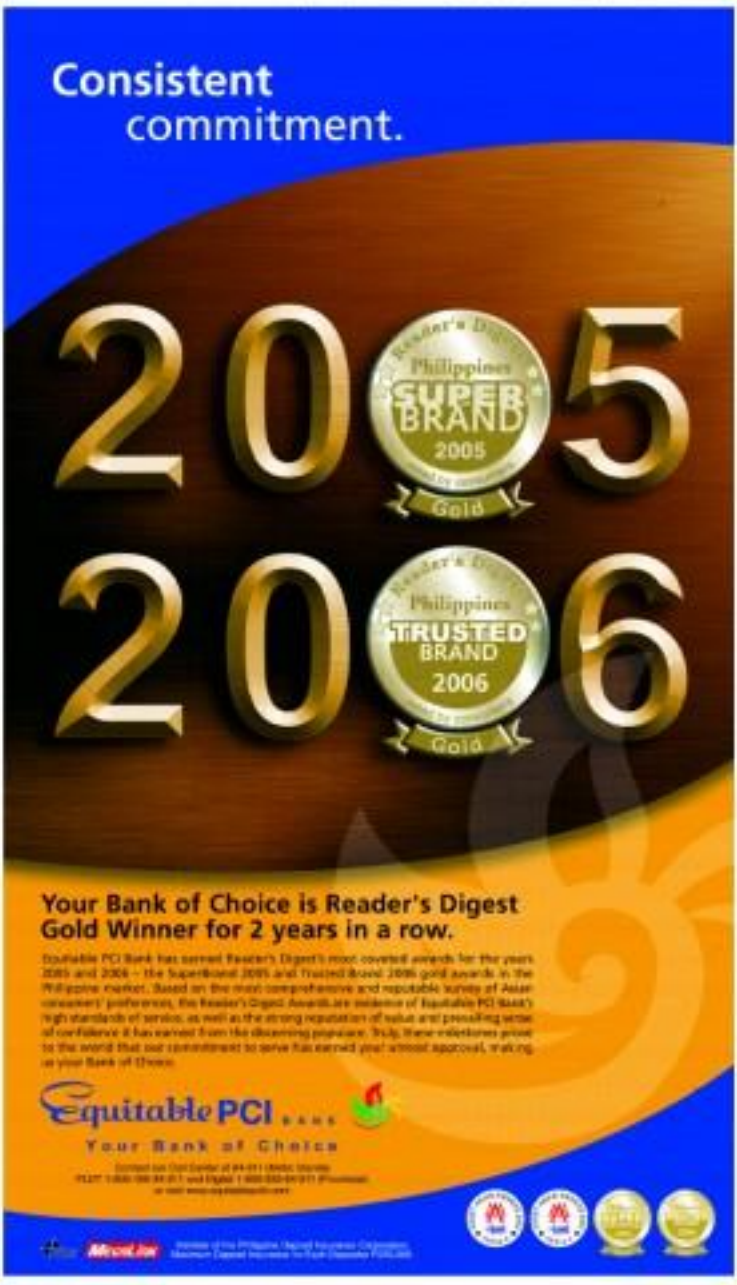
But no one than President Macapagal-Arroyo's chief of staff Mikhail Defensor yesterday took up the cudgels for Estrada, saying there was no basis at this point to conclude the former President or any member of his family were involved in money laundering.

"I am aware you that indeed money laundering happened but as to the involvement of the Estrada family, that is not one-iota," Defensor told reporters.

He said he saw the documents himself after meeting with the mother of Pelaez, Hacienda Pelaez, two weeks ago.

He said Hacienda Pelaez had sought the meeting to show him the papers that purportedly to be the money trail of the illicit bank transactions.

Pelaez, it will be recalled, was the US-based businesswoman who used then Philippine National Police Chief Director General Panfilo Lacson over unpaid handcuffs she had sold to the PNP like were the case against Lacson in the US court known. If she was able to collect any damages.



# Poor women now accepting family planning, says NSO survey

By Christian V. Esguerra

CONTRARY TO WOMEN, LONG CONSIDERED A problem sector in the government's reproductive health advocacy, are showing signs of accepting family planning, according to a recent national survey.

Among 6.108 Filipino women currently engaged in family planning, the poor were outnumbered their "non-poor" counterparts in terms of "unmeeting" to cost issue the practice, according to the 2005 Family Planning Survey conducted by the National Statistics Office.

In fact, 90 percent of the respondents to both classification "would be willing to pay for their contraceptive supplies" in the future, the survey showed.

"That's one step already because they are willing, it's more difficult if you're poor yet you still don't want to practice family planning," NSO administrator Carmelita Dimzon said reporters after the presentation of the survey results in Quezon City yesterday.

### Poor, not poor

Among the respondents who are into family planning, the NSO found out that one out of four currently married women "intends to stop doing so." Twice as those the intends to the women's plan to have children already.

The Family Planning survey, which the NSO began conducting in 1995, had around 10,000 respondents for last year's study, it was said.

The women surveyed were aged between 15 and 49 years old and classified either as "poor" or "non-poor."

Dimzon said the social classification was gauged through the respondents' possession of "household amenities," meaning appliances.

The women's willingness to use and buy their own contraceptives mattered, the week of another set of findings showing that the contraceptive prevalence rate (or the rate Filipinos are using contraceptives) "has not changed in the last five years."

### Method of choice

Of the currently married Filipino women surveyed, 49.3 percent were into contraceptive methods while 50.7 percent of them were not, according to the NSO study.

Among those using contraceptives, 36 percent were into modern methods, with pills as still the method of choice (27.1 percent). At least 13 percent of the respondents were engaged in traditional methods like calendar, rhythm and periodic abstinence methods and withdrawal.

By next year, the government will no longer receive contraceptive donations from abroad and will have to come up with its own supplies.

In the NSO survey, three out of five married women using contraceptives said they get their supplies and services from the public sector.

"Government hospitals are the principal source of services for hipatios and vasectomy," the survey said.

"Willingness" is the keyword here," Dimzon said reporters. "They (poor married women) are willing to pay for their supplies but they just don't have the capacity. How is where help should come in."

Among the country's 17 regions, Cagayan Valley registered the highest contraceptive prevalence rate at 58 percent, followed by Northern Mindanao (57 percent) and Central Luzon (55 percent), according to the survey.

The Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao had the lowest rate with 16 percent.

"Family planning practice is associated with the socio-economic characteristics of the women," Dimzon said in a statement. "Women who are elementary graduates or have reached a higher level of education are more likely to practice family planning than those who have not completed elementary school or those with no education." With Aries Secaler

# Bring it on, GMA allies say of new impeach rap

MEMBERS OF THE HOUSE MAJORITY yesterday dared the opposition to "test the ice" and just bring on their new impeachment complaint against President Macapagal-Arroyo even as they are sure of the President's stake position intact, nearly instant death for a second such indictment in just over a year.

The challenge was contained in a statement issued by House Majority Leader Prospero Nograles shortly after Representative Antonio Cuenco and Silvete Uy in which they also criticized a statement by Minority Leader Francis Escudero that opposition members who refuse to sign the new indictment should leave the House minority bloc.

Escudero said Monday that the new complaint against the Arroyo would be ready by the end of the month and would likely include the recent spate of killings of leftist activists and administration acts struck down by the Supreme Court as unconstitutional.

Malacañang was confident the new impeachment case would be immediately thrown out by a House dominated by members of the President's political coalition.

"Impeachment was junked in the first instance and will be junked again as a desperate move by a conspiracy of self-serving interests," Press Secretary Ignacio Bunye said in a statement. He added that the public was "not only weary but bored by these exercises."

Junior Secretary Raul Gonzalez used more colorful language with respect to what the administration would do when the new complaint is filed, which includes said would be during the President's State of the Nation address on July 25 "at the latest."

"We will kill it as the first instance," Gonzalez told reporters. "Why allow it to become a lingering situation?"

Nograles said the opposition was resorting to the "law of the jungle" with its threat to purge members who do not sign the impeachment complaint against the President.

"If the opposition still believes that impeachment would be a numbers game, then it (is) obvious that the majority would win because they have the numbers and they need not read or study the impeachment complaint anymore," the congressman's joint statement said.

The statement said the Supreme Court decisions on Executive Order 464, (allowed) prerogative response (EPR) and Presidential Decree 1877 as grounds for impeachment would be a hard sell. "These will not stand as basis because there was no culpable violations of the Constitution or betrayal of pub-

lic trust. The government implemented these policies to protect the paramount and national interest, not the President."

Christine O. Avendaño and Armand V. Nocum

# DOE asks oil firms to offer PUV discounts

By Abigail L. Ho and Jeronne Areng

THE DEPARTMENT OF ENERGY HAS ASKED oil firms to offer additional discounts to drivers of public utility vehicles after Malacañang on Monday slashed the tariff on oil for six months.

After a meeting with oil firm representatives yesterday, Energy Undersecretary Peter Medalla Abaya said the DOE was seeking a reprieve for the transport sector by moving to expand the discount on diesel fuel prices to P2 a liter from the current P1 a liter.

"The tariff reduction will be applied to all products, across the board. We're not asking them to give discounts for LPG (cooking gas), gasoline or even for diesel entirely. We just want them to give more discounts to their jeepney and bus lines," Abaya said.

Malacañang issued on Monday Executive Order 537 directing the reduction of the 3-percent tariff on crude and refined petroleum product imports to between 2 and 0 percent, depending on world oil price trigger.

The guidelines for the implementation of the order, including when reactivated the trigger prices, are now being finalized by the DOE.

Abaya said computations made by the DOE and the oil firms showed that a 1-percentage-point tariff reduction would translate to a decrease of around P1 a liter for the oil firms. "The difference in our computations is just about 3 centavos a liter, so there shouldn't be a problem with that."

Also yesterday, the militant labor group Kilusang Mayo Uno called for the repeal of the oil deregulation law, saying tariff reduction alone would not suffice to curb the impact of rising oil prices.

"Weak government intervention in the form of tariff cuts cannot stop Shell, Caltex, Petron and new oil players from increasing their prices. They will always find ways and skills to get away with frequent oil price hikes," said KMU spokesperson Francisco Ferrer.

"The government must seriously consider dropping the deregulation law and undertake immediate price control efforts with regards to imported crude oil and refined petroleum products," Ferrer said. With a report from Ayin Bayot

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# OPINION

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## Extermination

**EDITORIAL**

OVER A CENTURY AGO, THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE gained two words as part of the legacy of the Filipino-American War. They were "boondocks" and "amok." In the case of Justice Secretary Raul Gonzalez, his comment that party-list representatives should "go back to the mountains" is the kind of antique thinking that keeps rebels in the boondocks, while officials in Manila like the justice secretary run amok. It would be easy to pass off Gonzalez's tantrum as mere of the usual, except for the fact that whatever he says partakes of official policy.

Abraham Lincoln said a nation cannot be half slave and half free and that a nation divided against itself cannot stand. The overwhelming majority of Filipinos would prefer a nation in which the rule of law prevails, and in which its component provinces aren't haunted by the specter of perpetual conflict. The last half of the 20th century up to the present has been marked by entire swathes of the country being only nominally under the control of the Republic. Where the forces of the state and of rebels contested, the only victims are poverty, banditry and the abuse of human rights.

Because no country can move forward if perpetually distracted by anti-insurgency campaigns, governments have tried, with varying degrees of success, to accomplish through negotiations what all-out war can never achieve: an end to fighting, and the start of rebuilding. Painfully, slowly, our country has learned that the politics of confusion and provocation breeds more evils than it manages not, and that the politics of negotiation and compromise achieves much more in terms of stability and peace.

Since the Edsa Revolution, the policy of the state has been to negotiate a peace while gradually expanding the democratic space. This process reached a high point during the Ramos administration, in which a general achieved what the politicians failed to do. Since then, however, negotiations have given way to hostilities, with varying degrees of success.

However, what sets apart the Arroyo administration from previous ones (except, perhaps, the Marcos administration) is its indifference and even tacit support for extralegal solutions to the insurgency problem. Where administrations (and rebels) once used military offensives as sticks to make the carrot of negotiations more attractive, the Arroyo administration has abandoned negotiations, and half-heartedly pursued military offensives. Instead, political liquidations have become the defining characteristic of the government's attitude toward its ideological opponents.

Rhetorically, of course, President Macapagal-Arroyo and her officials condemn the assassination of leaders and organizers of the Left. Their rhetoric is accompanied by actions that speak louder than words. Military officers suspected of conspiracy (a, if not the actual masterminding of, political killings are promoted and decorated. Elected representatives are detained without charges, or threatened with legal actions so as to restrain their movements. And in reaction to a public outcry over such actions, the justice secretary's only reaction is to challenge leftists to head for the hills.

President Arroyo and Executive and their enemies from the party lists won't pay the immediate price for such bloodthirsty posturing. It is the people who will. Provinces plagued by insurgency will continue to bleed, and their residents will continue to seek refuge elsewhere. No rehabilitation, much less improvement of local resources or infrastructure can take place. This severs the purposes of a government that prefers a state of conflict to peace, which might earn people's ridicule in the harsh realities of our national life. It severs the resources of insurgents who would stubbornly fight, even if it means reducing the mountains and then the plains to ashes.

It certainly does not serve the public good. It does nothing for democracy, and extinguishes the hope that leftists can meaningfully participate in our democratic way of life. Ideally, ideology should be tested again in the polls. In reality, we are increasingly seeing it lead, whichever side a Filipino might be, to the grave.

## Lim: Drilon will stay

**As I See It**

*Neal H. Cruz*

WHAT COULD PRESIDENT MACAPAGAL-Arroyo and Sen. Mirriam Defensor Santiago have talked about on the way to and from Brazil, Indira? Before Santiago left the Philippines, she was, judging from her personal statements, still against Charter change. After coming home with President Arroyo, she is singing a different tune. She said there will be no more Senate by July when the 11th Congress convenes as a constituent assembly to amend the Constitution and shift to a parliamentary government. What could GMA have told her or offered her which can board the plane to make her change her mind?

Since GMA's economic adviser has already called for the wife of Bureau of Internal Revenue Commissioner Jose Mario Buenaventura for BIR's failure to meet its collection target for April, I think the President may have promised the top BIR post to somebody very close to the senator. After all, this post was used to be the cash cow for BIR and is now a prestigious assistant secretaryship.

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GMA is so desperate to have Charter change by July when it is reported that a new impeachment complaint will be filed against her, that she will promise anything just to allow for a change in the form of government. That is the only way to ward off a new impeachment charge. The people's initiative train is already on the way to its rendezvous, what with so many obstacles on the tracks, both legal and political. The last hope is a constituent assembly because a constitutional convention would take too long to save GMA from impeachment.

Oh yes, there's another way to evade impeachment. She can resign before July and call for a snap election.

* * *

A snap election seems to be akin to the call for the National Press Club which held its own elections last May 7. But instead of only one election, the NPC had two. The two competing factions held their own separate elections last Sunday. The committee on elections created by NPC president Antonio Arnaiz held its election on the fourth floor of the club's building. The ticket of Alex B. Reyes of the Manila Times won there.

The competing ticket of Roy Mabasa of the Bulletin obtained a temporary restraining order from the court against the committee on elections, which had disqualified ex-president Lousie Laguesma of the Tribune, who was unable to pay his unpaid debts of almost P90,000 to deadline fees, and a photographer nominated Reyes who was declared a nuisance candidate.

The three Reyes titles said the BIR was defective and held an election anyway. Instead of observing the TRO it asked for, the Mabasa ticket held its own election in the parking lot after a majority of the board, most of whose were in the Mabasa ticket, created its own election committee. Expectedly, Mabasa and his ticket won there.

So now the NPC has two sets of officers. Which one is the legitimate winner? Serving national defense.

Reyes said her ticket is the legitimate winner since he had the roster of NPC members, while the Mabasa ticket had none.

Mabasa said he is the legitimate winner since he got more votes than Reyes. But that was because anybody could vote in the election: downstairs, Reyes cautioned. In fact, some members who had already voted upstairs were persuaded to vote again downstairs.

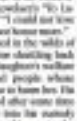
That election cannot be an accurate measure of the wishes of the members. The judge hearing the case may be inclined to nullify both elections and call for a new one, this time supervised by the court.

* * *

In the Senate, there may or may not be a new

## Generations

**There's the Rub**



*Conrado de Quiros*

THAT WAS A PRETTY HEARTWARMING story that came out on our front page last Sunday, the one that told of Molly, a 77-year-old woman who lost her daughter to a violent death in third-last March. Her daughter, Erika, had joined the NPA, wanting to change the world. She was killed instead in a raid by government troops. Folks would have turned 33 last May 6.

Molly herself was never an activist. She had preferred a quieter life devoted to contemplation, to changing herself instead of the world, during her own school years. But she had raised her child to see her surroundings for all that they were and could be, and with no small help from UP she had done so beyond what Molly herself could have imagined. Armed with the likes of youth and the dream of the ages, Erika had taken up arms to fight the things—and the people—that shackled her country. She paid the ultimate price for it.

It read something like this on Mother's Day, well, life goes on, they say, and it goes on. Or it goes on edgewise with them. What depths of grief. Molly, a widow, must feel with the loss of Erika only the sun knows. Mr. recently glimpse it, we can never know it. And God forbid we should ever have it. I suddenly remembered after reading the story the scene in "The Three Sisters" where Irina Theodore after seeing his second career in his cops tells Tuzenbakh needed. It: "The young perish while the old linger.... So parents should ever have to bury his child!"

I cannot imagine any pain worse than a mother's or father's having to bury their child, especially in the way.

I myself know of people who have similar stories, though they have not ended just as long really or devastatingly. I have a couple of friends in particular who have had an experience akin to this. Both necessarily are ones more than. One is ex-Inquirer Chris (call him Bud), and the other a pastor/music teacher/choirmaster (let's call her Maria). Both were never activists, the latter in particular lived a sheltered life as a

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president. Senate President Franklin Drilon has stated that he would honor his agreement with Sen. Manuel Villar to split the 40-year term of the Senate president. He said he would resign as president by July. But there would not necessarily take Villar Senate president. He would have to be elected by the 23 senators. But Villar may not be able to get the required 13 votes. He has only four votes.

In fact, there is no group that has the numbers to control Drilon. He has only four votes. In any event, the opposition has seven, or possibly eight, and LP/K ("unidentified flying objects") seven or six. Since no group has enough votes to elect a new president, the status quo would prevail and Drilon would remain as Senate president.

Then Affidavit-Buster, who was a guest of the Kapihan sa Manila last Monday along with Chairman Bayani Fernando of the Metro Manila Development Authority (MMDA), confirmed that the story of flowers in the Senate. Lim said that even assuming some LP/K's and some of the Villar with the four senators identified with him and the administration, that would add up to only 11 votes. Lim, who belongs to the opposition, said the seven opposition senators are likely vote for Drilon. That, plus the five votes Drilon controls makes 12—one vote short of the magic 13. That one vote would not be hard to get into you are already close, Lim noted.

For his part, Fernando said that while nullities has been during the opening of flower next month, the fact is that the cost of the Metro Manila's disaster is still not already be seen. He said the MMDA would plant computer chips in the windshields of all the buses with franchises for the Edsa route. With those chips, it would be easy to spot the violators and cut off their buses.

The MMDA operation on Edsa, he said, is caused by buses only one-third full. Hard up bumper-to-bumper along almost the whole length of Edsa. Many of them have franchises by provincial buses but their operators insist on plying Edsa.

They have to get Edsa as the premium route since there is no economic lack of transportation, or their franchises would be canceled, Fernando said.

imagine today the horrendous misery we must have put our parents through to our time each time we left home, toothmarks and of books to overnight trips, to dropping out. We took know how long in our seldom overnight. I you can compare all sorts of things in your mind today when your teenage son or daughter isn't home yet at 3:00 a.m., your parents would have done the same thing about you, exclusive. Today you know only that at that hour your kid is coming home. Then, your parents knew you were coming home.

All this has only bolstered my conviction about something I said last year. Which is why I am compelled to rage at an age when people expect me to hang my activism like spent rags well as get quietly into the night. I do not consider to struggle—no, the people who are presumed to have grown older and wiser, do not continue to struggle—but kids will have to do it for us. We do not rise to protest iniquity and stop abuse, our kids will have to do it for us. We do not end all symptoms and a moral normality that says we've done our bit for God and country, we do never our son, our kids will do their lives for us.

Of course, the choice the kids always have binds, which is to embrace—and in Erika's case, even die for it—a cause that history appears to have moved on from. Or to accept the way of life we have somewhat than heroic, more mundane than tragic. But if we look beyond the superficial aspects of the cause they embraced to the spark of idealism that underlies it, to the boundless capacity of youth to betake at instance and fight for what is good and decent, to the primitive powers of youth to unleash a storm of energy to do what their protected elders and betters have found very justification not to do, then we must seriously ask ourselves if we are not in some way guilty of their death by dereliction of duty.

We do not ask the questions, our kids will ask them for us. We do not live to make a better world for our kids, our kids will do so under our for us.

# 'Hinog sa pilit'

COMMENTARY

*Evelyn Miranda-Feliciano*

"I SUPPOSE I HAVE DONE IT," DAVID GLAPPED the banana skin on his empty plate, rising. "It's bound to be paper pusher."

"What... sir?" I asked incipient by the sudden change in his voice and the topic of our conversation over breakfast of oatmeal and fish grubcake, a combination only Filipinos can think of.

"This business," he pointed on the mildly yellow peeling of banana on his plate. "I once called the whole bunch would be stolen from its trunk, so I on it, down hoping it will ripen soon enough. Then look at the result!"

I knew all along it would end up still edible, yes, but not pleasant to the palate when he ingested a banana on a subordinate. It made a mental before the elder Bagets turned senselessly active in the wrench of a lung covered with dry banana leaves, plastic wafer and discarded joints. But when I finally put them on the table, we would go with a "people's uniqueness." This is why I am writing a book with on my imaginary path were circling the house that morning, just part of

that "people" in its "people's initiative," "you can see find any valid reason for thinking that choking the Constitution more affordable for better under this dispensation. What needs changing to my mind is the competence of people holding power in government.

The superannuation stars attack President Macapagal-Arroyo and her hallelujah choir hope same one with figure up Bagets to satisfy the ego. reasons, using the government machinery and money, clearly shows that the move is not best for people but from the government. That in is self-fulfilling creative initiatives people may have left.

As part of the mess, I have the thought of having manipulated by my own government simply to satisfy I am reminded of a simplemon and its comments need to counter logic as possible. Thus, I am be tempted to put my name on a piece of paper for a cities killed in the recession and unemployment my government misunderstanding me that my signature can help change the entire Constitution and bold of government's whim; in fact, the whole exercise has no legal basis for lack of an enabling law.

I am repulsed by a government that distorts facts and realities in advance to even selfish their ends through my signature because it is afraid of its own shadow of shady deeds, corrupt practices and questionable election irregularities.

I am outraged by a government that humiliates me as obedience by mental flaw and serious and still disguise itself as a democratic

The history, the tormented optimism, the speed with which the so-called "people's initiative" is being hammered into the consciousness of the citizens is a dangerous strategy by the government to make living as pilit, a mayor that is altogether simple, out of season, unreasonable, unreasonable, and anything forced to ripen before its time, before its inner texture and set here—plenty of political favorites—comes out distasteful, disappointing. If not repulsive. Ang hinog ay pilit ay mapaitin, lesson. Or, it could be, like in politics, regressive.

"I would pick any buss if it's not ripe for the picking again," my husband muttered during breakfast that morning. He stood up. "If it gets rotten, solve it."

He rummaged through the inside of the fridge for something.

I smiled to myself, remember my fat cousin as I pictured, now almost a head up, a fat cousin. Would PGMA allow her presidential son to to "solve" from her through a real people's initiative of economist and disenfranchise privileges? Like not paying taxes, bypassing certain processes and services, COPA overhauling their money, government employees not receiving their salary, government not engaged by a columnist? It was even suggested that prisons not hold Monitor for the people. That is all to suppose the one up there who claims she is God sees not the "true leader" of our time (read: the wonderful boy I could be).

It may be time to shut. Or it may, hell, stop hoing sa pilit ay mapaitin at magsuka.

Evelyn Miranda-Feliciano is now a freelance writer on after 22 years with the Inquirer for Studies in Asian Church and Culture. She is also an her facilitator to seminars on writing, women, and a used family life.

# Catherine's story

AT LARGE

*Rina Jimenez-David*

"LEGISLATIVE IS THE NAME GIVEN TO ONE OF four measures on death row rules are the subject of case studies included in "Invisible Realities: Forgotten Women. The women in death row hold a place in the public agenda of death penalty, and prison life in general." Endorsed, Catherine's story might prove useful in tracking the links between a woman's life experience, particularly of abuse, and the "decisions" she makes.

One of the key proponents in the amendment of the study known as the Women, was tried against setting up childhood physical and sexual abuse as a way of explaining why the women got into conflict with the law. "This might lead to engineering convictions of abuse, but all of which deserve to be heard," and

And yet, it seems impossible nonetheless to point out how common childhood abuse figures in the life stories not just of the women on death row, but of women in prison, "women survivors of abuse" who commit crimes, and even women in general.

Here's Catherine's story:

* * *

**W** HEN SHE met the researchers met Catherine, she was one of the newest occupants of the death row compound. She was told that she was to be being there. She evaded the air and detention of a well-educated suburban housewife, which she was; before her arrest. The fifth of eight children of a middle class couple, she is

a college graduate and quite articulate in English.

But there is more to Catherine's story than her considerable circumstances at the time of her arrest. For some reason, Catherine's mother singled her out for abuse in childhood, sometimes to the point of torture. Shortly after having been abused publicly, Catherine decided to elope with the man she married. Enemy. He eventually moved into their home.

Through she got pregnant by Jimmy, the relationship didn't last. She caught him molested in an affair with her own sister. Still, due to cultural family sympathy from her mother, who blamed her for "bringing a snake into the house."

* * *

It was at this low point in her life that Catherine met Edsel, a friend of an older brother, who, though married, was also a divorcee, managed to convince Catherine to cohabit with him.

Aside from her eldest child, Catherine would lose three sons into a daughter by Edsel, and live a comfortable suburban life, keeping house, bringing her children to school and looking after them, and generally ensuring her existence on her children and husband.

Edsel was a good provider early on, but later would falter in his responsibilities, as he got more

and more involved with drugs. To make ends meet, Catherine engaged in a number, selling garments she got on consignment. When enrollment time came, she bagged her siblings for financial help.

But also Catherine engaged into Edsel's drug dealing practice and conspiring, recruiting teenagers as courier of the day, and investing with them excitedly to a room in their home that he kept off limits to everyone else.

One day, Catherine woke up new time to see the cell emerged to bring her children to school. She decided to step by a nine food plate to pick up some hamburgers for her children. She was approaching, the realize when she heard someone call out her name. It turned out to be a team the had seen with Edsel and so decided to follow him out. Then suddenly, Catherine was dragged to a parked car where seven or five men were waiting and they all demanded to know where Edsel was.

* * *

THE MEN turned out to be undercover agents and it seemed clear to Catherine that Edsel was their real target. Brought to Camp Crame, she was held without bail for nine days after she refused to sign documents cleared in front of her that would have her admitting guilt in drug possession.

Catherine was adamant that she did not know where Edsel was (he had stopped coming home shortly before her arrest) but refused to help police locate him because she was counting on him to defend her after her children. Edsel was eventually arrested, and her children were parceled out to relatives, including one to Ed. and's wife.

According to the researchers, Catherine denies to be still enamored about why she was turned out the drug business. But she admitted to dismay legal strategy with the prison lawyer her estate hired, all he told her was to "cry in front of the judge so he would take pity on you."

But the judge seemed to relish his reputation as the "hanging judge" (Hanging Judge) and the more begging to his friends that after he had sentenced a woman to life, he would sometimes murder woman count. "That was me," says Catherine.

# Caves for Aguinaldo's camp?

LOOKING BACK

*Andreh P. Geampio*

FORMER MOAFB IN LIKEMBAW MAMIS, SOU

I recently joined a tour of Subanon organized by Bambi Harper, Mia Bulfao and Chitty Suine that brought me back to Baguio. I had gone there many before, ages ago, with Bernardo Inciong when it was reportedly swarming with NPAs. Afterwards, I took some graduate students there on a field trip as I was working a class on the Philippine Revolution, knowing there was no better way to study history than bringing students to a place where the actual sites are literally target than life. Most of us had come prepared to visit all the way to the "Bat Cave," also known as "Bahay Pukaka." Worse, we did not know that we needed reinforcement. So I put my action face phone to good use and called up Ed Maceda who gave me an idea of what Bambi Aguinaldo and his men had to go through. It was an experience none of us will easily forget.

I was informed that there is a very long cave at Kabayan, a town that is now the capital of Benguet. Supposedly, it was in Balete Cave, Kabayan, that Gen. Emilio Aguinaldo had his command post when he was captured by Gen. Frederick Funston on March 23, 1901. Funston and his men were disguised as Macabebe scouts when they entered Aguinaldo's camp. Aguinaldo was then brought to Manila where he took his oath of allegiance to the United States government.

Planning Aguinaldo's camp in Biak-na-Bato drove him that he had been made of bamboo and thatch. He had to determine where this need to be located instead of prepossessing the original that Aguinaldo and company had to the labyrinth of caves. After all, he was in Biak-na-Bato, a place where valid tell you that nobody lived in the caves for extended periods, but there as I keep reminding my students, "common sense is not common."

There are a number of primary sources on Biak-na-Bato and of events, the most fantastic of these is the book by Pedro Alejandro Hernandez who described his arrival in such fashion.

"We reached the pinnacle of Biyak-na-Bato crowned with huts that housed the troops and the people and the principal officials of the republic in the morning. The universal hinds sang and whistled in the virgin forest. Somehow or the other, some lights flickered inside the already quiet huts.

Timidly and without losing a moment, we directed our steps to the hut occupied by the Filipino chief and his wife. "Ben Bulalo Aguinaldo received me affectionately and lodged me in his dwelling hut. It was as comfortable and narrow by and but with very few things in it—but I felt as at home in the evening. The universal hinds sang and whistled in the virgin forest. Somehow or the other, some lights flickered inside the already quiet huts.

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There goes on a small room in which I had to share my bed together. The sister of Aguinaldo, Mining, a very handsome lady, the son of general and circle type, an affable and loving, expert with her aged mother went in charge of

giving me lodging. They kept me warm from the mornat cold. They gave me pieces of paper and a soldier's clothes—the only things available. All was done for God and peace. I had stayed the new way I would. I used to sleep, preparing my plans for the conference the next day since I would have to be an arbiter on the subject of peace, but it was impossible to sleep.

"There was a continuous weighing of horses consisting of lances in their shoulders and rifles. Daily I spent my time in the morning at 4a.m. by attending to the monotonous sound of the black and arrogant hawks and baboon, of the dismal cries, of the cocks and crowings of the virgin forest. They presented in continuous and beautiful savage as one way the monotonous sound of the guerrillas who were describing their normal activities and accidental catastrophes."

Reading this is a bit difficult not only because of the florid, run-around style that we do not employ in English, but also because I wonder if all the birds he mentioned are still there today. The mountain in the reserve is now a favorite haunt of bird watchers, campers, and hikers and nearby, On the trail, you still hear children asking for money or candy. The place is still quite beautiful and during the summer, it can be a very refreshing swimming hole with the cool mountain water cascading through the rocks that literally dot the area. Indeed, "Biak-na-Bato."

In reading the reserve near makes one wonder about the flat, stone formation that people claim was Aguinaldo's table, and if the cave where it can be found was Aguinaldo's headquarters. Eager to disappoint the curious people, but none of the accounts mentioned the cave—only a camp with makeshift houses. Definitely this requires more research.

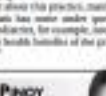
Comments are welcome at andreh.geampio@gmail.com

# Summer's rituals

THE WEEKEND TYPHOON SEMONDOL (A "DAT" IS AMISS that) be striking soon, which means also a running on for the school of passing of proposals or make-or-break exams.

I've written in the past about this practice, mainly to point out that its method basis has some other questions. The American Academy of Pediatrics, for example, issued a statement in 1999 saying the health benefits of the practice "are very compelling enough."

You can't blame those who dangle their legs from trees—mainly mere—whenever I did and, with questioning the need for summer vacation, I was told I'd say that you can be entertained and still be quiet, oh, sloppy.



PINOY KASI

*Michael L. Tan*

Others argued that circumscribe was needed to produce children. To which I would respond that circumscribe is not practiced in mainland China as how some we now have more than a billion Chinese? Or take note: Some angry readers asked if I had been out and living with a lot of dramatic flair, yes I've been mistaken, as with most Chinese (Opinion.)

'Sagot'

Another popular Filipino belief is that circumcision is needed, around puberty, to spur growth.

I should share a little story here to refute that argument. Many years ago, the NGOO was host with got a church volunteer agency in the Philippines, to organize a six-week circumcision festival to help combat and prolong it and end all the free circumcision missions being offered. When we asked about this one clinic, over lunch, the NGO staff explained that no uncircumcised boy would end up house or with stunted growth.

Shaked answered all his "hugots" questions. "Hindi yan totoo." (That's one more.) The small house saw in homeless laughing and talking. Then, what was shaked that 2 children, was, as then Duralign, saw in. And yet the Bands are said to be the tallest people on earth. Beside now, if circumcision produces tall people, why do we still have so many basketball players, some of whom are probably aspirs.

Again, Pinpin Ang, Let's find it, we thing are some to get circumcised to grow taller. Which is more likely, the "natural" explanation people for life, starting them as poor lovers and poor basketball players (too only are they shorter, they're also said to have poor shots). The worst is even said to involve people, as in a fight. I saw the other week posted on a wall as a warning: "Sagot lang ng umiiti dun." (Only the uncircumcised will get hurt.)

The worst is when someone super parent and imagery friends wrinkle their noses, claiming the poor fugitive walks through.

* * *

Some readers are probably now lining to call me, first, what about all those reports now that circumcision can prevent HIV/AIDS.

We need to be a tad careful here. Yes, it's true: medical researchers have found that there generally seems to be fewer HIV infections in countries where circumcision is practiced. In Asia, the lower infection rates have been noted in the "natural" of countries, which includes the Philippines, Bangladesh, Indonesia and Nepal. Even, circumcision is part of our pre-colonial muslim heritage).

Generally, the studies seem to suggest some "protective" effect from circumcision, not just for males but for their female partners. The reduced risk isn't just for HIV/AIDS. In a paper issued last month, the UN Agency for International Development noted that "circumcision has been known to "greatly reduce a man's risk of penile cancer ... and it also reduces risk of some other sexually transmitted diseases (STDs), including chancroid, herpes and syphilis. It eliminates problems such as phimosis (inability to retract foreskin) and balanitis (inflamed foreskin), and has been shown to significantly reduce the risk of cervical cancer among female partners of circumcised males."

How does this protective effect work? It's interesting that the anti-circumcision camp has argued that uncircumcised males experience more sexual pleasure because the cover skin is sensitive, but now the pro-circumcision camp says the foreskin actually has more nerve endings (cells that receive electrical impulses) than the tougher cells of the penis. It becomes more vulnerable to HIV. The foreskin is also said to be more susceptible to cuts and abrasions, which increase easier infection by HIV and other microorganisms causing STDs.

* * *

No magic bullet

Where does this leave us now? USAID is careful in saying "MC" (sigh, Americans) discourages the Filipinos risk how has accepted it not a "magic bullet" and that it "it will not provide full protection against HIV." Rather wisely, USAID also points out that circumcision "will provide little or no protection against its other STDs such as genital herpes and Chlamydia. Doctors hastily to add [ and obviously will not prevent unwanted pregnancies."

It's important that we keep repeating that just because Filipinos are "cut" does not mean we're immune from HIV. The HIV epidemic in the Philippines, previously described as "low and slow," is now considered to be "hidden and growing" as we need to continue to be vigilant and to promote a package of prevention methods, including condoms.

USAID, in fact, warns that there may be a need to have programs of behavioral "disinhibition" among circumcised males who might resort to high-risk behavior thinking they're adequately protected by circumcision.

Since circumcision is a long-standing practice culture, I'd go a step further and look at how we might want to institute it as a program in Kenya, where circumcision, which is practiced as a traditional ritual, now integrates preventive health education.

In the Philippines, circumcision is only one of summer's rituals of passage. It used to be that after young men had recovered from the ordeal, they were given an exhibition-sexual thing must is a symbol for their "bayag," a second more profane form of baptism.

Times have changed and we should be rethinking these rituals. Circumcision may be a good time to explain that the passage from boyhood to manhood isn't just a matter of being big down under, the coming ritual, or of going off to conquer women in foreign lands.

There is a folk belief that the circumcised male should "protect" his wives from the female gaze, but this could and rarely like romance. That belief could well be used to explain that manhood is a matter of learning to be responsible, and of respecting women.

Human metaphors aside, I'm found in the Philippines that it's especially useful to remind young men or see, in every woman, their own mother or sister. That kind of thinking may go for a more effective preventive action against HIV/AIDS and STDs than circumcision.

# Making a scapegoat out of the Charter

IN REPORTING THAT in 2005 the Philippines ranked 69th out of 81 countries in global competitiveness, the Switzerland-based Institute for Management Development did not say that among the causes of this deplorable performance is our present Constitution or some of its provisions. ("IMF warns poorly in competitiveness survey," PDI, 5/12/2006) In fact, Mia Dimayuga, project manager for Global Competitiveness Programs, cited as reason the Philippines' poor ratings in education, health, research and development, infrastructure, macroeconomic weakness, political instability, corruption, brain drain, weak civil service and poor governance.

Similar poor foreign assessments by the World Bank, International Monetary Fund and Asian Development Bank blamed the present Constitution for our economic poverty and global economic performance. Yet the Arroyo administration and her Charter-change advocacy groups, including Speaker Jose de Venecia, continue to proclaim ad nauseam that what's wrong with our country is our Constitution.

It is obvious that the Arroyo administration is making the Constitution a scapegoat for its failure to improve the economy and acquire approval of hunger, unemployment, etc. In its obsession to stay in power, the Arroyo administration resorts to an acquire legitimacy through a dubious plebiscite and chooses to turn a blind eye on the real problems of our country.

**MANUELA ALMARIO**
**mlalmario@yahoo.com**

# Morality play on Marcos wealth

THE INQUIRER defies 30 EDSA-ites asked: Has the Presidential Commission on Good Government not completely in error of right and wrong?

PCGG Chair Camilo Sabio "clarified" the senators in the legislative hearing precisely because his actions of right and wrong will hint that they could be fishing for something—for anything—that could pillory President Macapagal-Arroyo with. It was wrong for the senators to mix budget hearings into opportunities for head-hunting. It was right for Sabio to shield the President from legislative malevolence now gone cadaverous. If anything, a solid union of right and wrong marked the refusal of Sabio to answer questions dipped in tactics, notwithstanding protestations to the contrary.

The editorial likewise accused me of "going overboard" in "trumpeting" my endorsement talks with the fiduciaries. I was, of course, being transparent, informing the public from the very start what was going on. "Penalty in trumpeting" was my preferred sentence, in keeping with your denunciation.

While you lament, forever night about newspapers unlimited access to labeling anything, they seem always to right with their bias.

The Inquirer was dead wrong in claiming there were "talks with the Marcoses for a 70:30 sharing." There are representative talks that will be entering one way or the other, but no one is talking shares 70-30.

I bet the Inquirer ignored the astonishing Eddie Gil—with no misplaced glee—when he said he would pay off our national debt with his own money if he should win the presidential elections of 2004. The editorial mocked us and the Marcos wealth for not remotely coming close to Gil's billions, which happened to have made the same talks. The Inquirer is free to ignore others, PCGG commissioners had better watch out—that apparently is to take on the lowest.

On the report that I said "I don't care about the moral issues involved," instead of demonstrating how the Inquirer gained the art of courtesy, let me just remind the newspaper that in my passionate fight for press freedom, I never gravy much the same thing. "We will give media space to stop plunder and other so-called discriminate as they can be bound by the public to do her best marketplace of ideas. We don't care about the moral issues involved."

Indeed, when newspapers mince up a storm to the world, that rubbish is worth less than unusually astute one—less insisted, failed less, less amused. There should be occasions when marketing morality could be a front pages listed act.

Lastly, the Inquirer incorrectly quoted the 1986 Supreme Court decision on one particular compromise agreement, to our purposes. The manner in which it quoted and interpreted that ruling had been self-serving and deceptive in any legal mind. Instead of reading court decisions with readily salted, Inner don't see moral issue for the newspaper.

**—ROLANDO MENDOZA,**
**commissioner,**
**Presidential Commission on Good Government,**
**HC Bldg., #1 Edsa, Mandaluyong City**

*Commissioner Mendoza submits everything. We too see one.— Ed.*

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SIX DIGIT (6/49 lotto draw)
5 5 1 9 2 4

Across the NATION

6/42 Lotto/Vis-Min
7 11 15 21 38 40
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# 6 out of 10 cops don't own homes

CAMP CRAME, PAMPANGA—SOME 73,000, OR 62 percent, of policemen in the country do not have homes and lots of their own.

"They either rent or live with their relatives," said Deputy Director General Oscar Calderon, PNP deputy chief for administration and chair of the PNP housing board.

Calderon said the PNP had tapped the Land Bank to help ease the housing problem among policemen and their families. It launched on Monday in Tarlac City the first of 68 areas for the "Pulis ko, bingi" program.

General Ballaga has helped build thousands of decent and affordable homes in poor urban and rural communities, mobilizing the labor and financial contributions of private individuals and corporations as well as public agencies.

General Ballaga branded Tony Abaloz joins Vice President Nell de Castro, concurrent chair of the Housing and Urban Development Coordinating Council, in Monday's capsule-laying rites in a Gil Puyat housing site in Barangay Macabebe.

At least 200 policemen assigned to various stations in Central Luzon will initially benefit from the project.

Calderon said Tarlac Rep. Susan "Shalmy" Yap-Sulit pledged ₱3.2 million in the project. The money would come from the lawmaker's countryside development fund.

Local governments in Tarlac, Calderon said, committed to pay for the years-old teeming construction equipment.

Each single detached, 20-square-meter unit costs ₱60,000.

Calderon said Leonel Kallinga agreed to shoulder half of the amount. Policemen would pay the other half through a loan from the government-owned Pag-Ibig Fund.

De Castro urged policemen to cherish "with the same fervor" the housing privileges given them by the government and the private sector.

He said that while government was promoting the housing needs of reporters, such as those living along the right-of-way of the PNR North and South Lines, the housing project was also focusing on the unique needs of the government service, particularly the low-salaried employees.

Under the Institutional Housing Program of the government, priority is given to teachers, soldiers, policemen, and LGU employees.

"That is why you should treasure this benefit. If there are requirements needed, let's work on it. If there are documents to be made, let's pay them. That is all for your family," said De Castro.

De Castro said the housing project for policemen was a concept of the PNP through its personnel housing assistance program, with the help of the Land Bank of the Philippines.

The construction of 50 housing units will be sponsored by the Leonel Kallinga, in cooperation with the local government of Tarlac, the PNP and the National Housing Authority.

The Armed Forces of the Philippines Savings and Loans Association Inc. (AFPSLAI) will donate ₱6 million for the construction of 200 more housing units in Tarlac and over ₱60,000 per unit. Also, an additional ₱50,000 per beneficiary would be available from the Public Safety Financial Benefit Financial Institutions (PSAFBFI).

De Castro also lauded non-governmental organizations (NGOs), such as the Gawad Kalinga, which have been giving assistance to the government in building shelters for squatters. Demetrio Orcino, PDI Central Luzon Bureau and Cynthia Balana in Manila

FIRST STEP
A teacher starts cleaning her classroom at the Phuket Central Elementary School in Tuvi, Davao City in preparation for class opening next month.

## Roundup

### Smuggled Korean cars held

ZAMBOANGA CITY—Customs authorities here on Thursday opened two container vans and found smuggled Korean cars. Sigmund Rafa, inventory officer of the Bureau of Customs, said they seized the containers in January on suspicion their contents were not properly declared. He said the shipper declared the contents of the containers as auto parts. But he said after the seizure, the BOC conducted the investigation. Bongo Customs Broker Inc. was declared the consignee. Rafa said when it was opened on Thursday, they found the car 464 Sportage vehicles and a Hyundai van.
Dennis Jay Santos, PDI Mindanao Bureau

### Symposium on disabilities

CEBU, 10/07 Symposium Tapping Symposium on Developmental Disabilities will be held on Thursday and Friday at the Ateneo de Manila at Fil-mod City public City, Mabalay, Mandaluyong City. Hosted by the First Steps Intervention and Therapy Center, Inc. based in Bayong Makabtia, Calamba City and held in cooperation with the Ateneo Integrative Academy of Bihan, Laguna, the symposium will feature the theme "ADHD: Multidimensional and Multifaceted—Binary Issues and Perspectives." For more info, call (0918) 658-8018 or (0928) 620-8211, or e-mail firststeps_ph@yahoo.com.

### Hospital donates medicines

CEBU CITY—A private hospital based in Tokyo, Japan has offered over ₱2 million worth of medicines for Muslim communities in war-torn areas in Mindanao. The donations will be used for medical missions in the provinces of Basilan, Sarangani, Lanao del Norte, Sultan Kudarat and Zamboanga del Sur by the Bangsamoro Development Agency (BDA), the designated development arm of the Moro Islamic Liberation Front. (BS) Officials said the medicines were provided by Fukushoku Medical Corp., the largest chain of privately owned hospitals in Japan. The first leg of the medical mission was held in Basilan, Bilazing on May 10.
Jeoffrey Maitem, PDI Mindanao Bureau

### Albay seeks IRA recovery

LEGAZPI CITY—Provincial board member Renato Fernandez Jr. has initiated a move to recover Albay's share in the ₱17.6 billion internal revenue allotment (IRA) withheld by the national government under ex-President Gloria in 2000 to 2001. Following the Supreme Court ruling that declared the IRA as unconstitutional, Fernandez filed a resolution authorizing Governor Fernando Gonzalez to enter into a memorandum of understanding (MOU) seeking the release of the IRA through the Department of Budget and Management (DBM) without the need for a special provision in the national budget.
Edgar Allan, PDI Southern Luzon Bureau

### 6 dead in truck collision

PAGADIAN CITY—At least six people died and four others injured when two trucks collided along the national highway in Aurora, Zamboanga del Sur on early Sunday. Zamboanga del Sur Provincial Police Director Ismael Fajardo said the fatalities were aboard a Pagadian-bound six-wheeler Elf truck that crashed into a 10-wheeler sand dump cargo truck in the barangay hovering around 7 a.m. Fajardo said the Elf truck tried to overtake another vehicle before colliding with the cargo truck on the opposite lane.

The six-wheeler truck turned out to be laden running a packed 9 trucks," he said.

Fajardo said that the driver and three passengers of the 10-wheeler truck were seriously injured and were immediately brought to the nearest General Hospital.

Aurora police chief Chief Inspector Robert Bobias said they had already retrieving the dead bodies because these were trapped by the crumpled metal parts of the Elf truck's cabin. They said they had to use acetylene torches to retrieve the mangled bodies of the victims, all of their male.
Michael Saavedra, PDI Mindanao Bureau

# 7 more added to 'Caloy' death toll in Sorsogon

SEVEN MORE PEOPLE DIED IN Sorsogon in the wake of tropical storm "Caloy," or Typhoon Mina, the government of Ormoni Mindoro placed the province in a state of calamity.

Police said five fishermen from Bagatao Island in Magallanes, Sorsogon were confirmed dead. Two were found dead in Sta. Magdalena town, some 70 km southwest of Sorsogon City.

Gamar Tellada, Ormoni Mindoro provincial disaster coordinating council official, said 24,307 families were affected by the typhoon.

He said the fourfare hit were Pinamalayan where more than 1,200 families were moved to evacuation centers.

Almost 500 families are in evacuation centers in Calapan, he said.

He said the provincial council got for Aruan Panaligan pre-mission to use the province's ₱10 million calamity fund.

The storm destroyed at least ₱50 million in crops, said Tellada, but the damage estimates could reach much more as reports come in.

At least 1,500 houses were destroyed while 2,000 others suffered damages.

Power was restored in some parts of Calapan but the rest of the province is still without electricity.

Tellada said it would take at least a week to restore power.

He said most of the roads have been cleared and are now open to motorists.

Barangay City and the coastal towns of Tingloy and Mabini have declared a state of calamity in their areas.

Armando Dagpin, director of the Office of Civil Defense in Calabarzon, said at least ₱19C million in infrastructure and crops were destroyed in Batangas.

Members of the Bailjan and Dimasalang tribes were moved to the city's public market and the Lobo Elementary School.

Student town in Batangas reported losses of ₱3.68 million.

The two dead in Barangay Bico in Sta. Magdalena, Sorsogon were trying to salvage their fishing boat when they were battered by strong winds and waves, authorities said.

Sta. Magdalena Mayor Alejandro Gasea reported to the Provincial Disaster Coordinating Council (PDCC) that at least ₱13.3 million in crops were destroyed in the town.

Neal Penaa, PDCC senior officer, asked other mayors in Sorsogon to submit reports to the council for compilation and record-keeping. Penaa, he said, would be submitted to the regional disaster coordinating council and the national disaster coordinating council. Marlon Ramos, Bobby Labadan and Ephraim Aguilar, PDI Southern Luzon Bureau

# Court stops signature verification process

By Nestor P. Burgos Jr. and Felipa V. Calma
PDI Pangasinan Bureau

BOHOL CITY—OPPONENTS OF moves to amend the Constitution have scored a major victory after a Cagayan court barred Commission on Elections (Comelec) officials from verifying collected signatures of registered voters for a people's initiative.

In a two-page order released on May 13, Judge Edward Contreras, of the Bohol City Regional Trial Court (RTC) Branch 17, issued a preliminary injunction against the Comelec director in Western Visayas and officials of the poll body in Cagayan.

The order effectively prevents the election officials from proceeding with the authentication of signatures collected to start the process for the petition for prohibition, is resolved.

Contreras issued the preliminary injunction after the lapse of a 20-day temporary restraining order that he issued last April 25.

Citing the importance of the case, Contreras suspended the petitioner from paying the injection bond.

Opponents of the initiative hailed the court decision.

"This is a major victory for those seeking to block these self-serving and malicious moves to amend the Constitution," said Hope Havalla, regional coordinator of the party-list group Bayan Muna.

In his order, Contreras said the preliminary prohibitory injunction was necessary "in the interest of justice and fair play and to do the case to render ineffectual the judgment in the main case of prohibition."

Contreras also said in his order that the petitioner was entitled to the injunction based on evidence and arguments presented by both sides.

The law petitioners, former Bohol City councilor Boy Antonio Jose Arteaga, accused the Comelec officials of violating the March 1997 Supreme Court ruling "Santiago vs Comelec."

The decision ruled that republic Act 6735, or the Initiative and Referendum Act of 1989, fails in enabling law to support a people's initiative to amend the Charter.

The respondents argued that the petitioner should have first availed of administrative remedies with the Comelec before filing the case in the RTC.

LUSH
Lush vegetation awaits visitors to the evergreen forest of Subang near the Bamboo Nature Park Resort in Palawan.

# Cagayan town mayor nabbed for murder

TUGUEGARAO CITY—POLICE ON Monday arrested a Cagayan mayor charged with double murder last year, on the strength of a warrant issued by a Manila judge.

Senior Supt. Jaime Isidro Mobal, Cagayan police director, said Deputy Director Carlo Antipuesto Jr. was also on to have taken to face charges involving the murder of lawyer Franklin Tamargo and his daughter, Princess Ira, in Manila last year.

Antipuesto was arrested on the strength of a warrant issued by Judge Oscarlito Pangalangan of Manila regional trial court, Mobal said.

He said Antipuesto did not resist arrest.

The mayor's son, Deputy Gov. Manuel Antipuesto, who was also implicated in the killings, is at large.

Mobal said the police's two police teams led by Senior Insp. Romeo Mangaring, Regency police chief, to secure the police convoy that took Antipuesto to Metro Manila.

Mobal ordered Mangaring to send a security team to the Regency town hall to guard the mayor's office and keep away from the mayor's stepmother, Gilbanese Vivian Jr., PDI's Luzon Bureau

SUBMERGED: some buried under tons of mud, rocks and debris, but drawn the sympathy of donors from various countries, including Filipino immigrants in the United States.

# Donations keep pouring in for buried village

By Joey A. Gabieta
AB Visayas Bureau

MAASIN, LEYTE—As financial assistance for victims of the massive landslide in Barangay Guinsaugon, St. Bernard town in Southern Leyte keeps pouring in,

A US-based Filipino organization yesterday handed two checks amounting to $16,500 (roughly P825,000) to the Department of Education in Eastern Visayas based here for its Project Oasis Guinsaugon Talaang Ka-bataan.

The project was designed to address the immediate needs of students in the barangay still mourning the Feb. 17 landslide which covered the village of about 1,000 people with mud and boulders.

Flor Minero Villena, one of the treasurers of the Philippine Nurses Association of Delaware (PNAD) based in Virginia Beach, Virginia, handed checks worth $6,000 from the Mutual of Mercy (MoM) and $4,000 from the Council of Filipino Organizations of Delaware (CoFilo) to Regional Assistant Director Alberto Bernabe and project coordinator Norma Hagad.

The PNAD is part of the CoFilo. Villena was tasked by the MoM to personally hand their donation to the Depled officials.

The donations were intended to benefit 103 students, 16 of whom would be entering college. The other students are in the elementary and high school levels.

Leo Diaze, 17, one of the beneficiaries, said he was happy that the government and private groups were not getting tired of helping the children of Guinsaugon.

"I will always be grateful to them. Now, I can be assured that somehow I can finish my college education," he told the reporters.

Diaze completed his high school education in March at the Santa Nicolas High School in St. Bernard. He plans to take maritime course to become an engineer.

He lost his mother Jocelyn and five siblings, including her 3-month-old brother, in the tragedy. The Depled took him in for 3 months' job, which ended Monday.

Villena, a native of Palo, Leyte, said they were swept with sadness upon learning what happened to Guinsaugon. They decided to think of ways of helping the victims.

On April 30, the WWT and Del Gatos, consisting mostly clothing and canned goods through the Streetlight Philippines, a charitable organization based in Jacksonville.

Villena said the financial assistance extended by the group and the MoM was meant to help the students continue as they could finish education and have "normal and productive lives."

"Thank goodness, there were also organizations, generous people who wanted to do the same. That is why this was realized," Villena said.

She said another $4,000 would be donated soon to Project Guinsaugon by the CoFil "pending positive feedback on their initial donation" and $8,000 was also allocated by the Mission of Mercy to be used for the construction of two school buildings.

Inclusive in the pledge is the dominoes would be used in accordance with the project's objectives.

"Everything will be accountable," Belcebuto said.

The Depled has requested over P800,000 from different organizations and individuals since the project was launched in March 8.

The donations were deposited in the Land Bank of the Philippines.


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# Meet Tarlac's 'Calendar King'

By Russell Aranjuez
Tarlac City

JEEPNEY DRIVER Efren Ilarazag of Barangay Casingcasing in Tarlac City was in Grade 4 when he stopped going to school because of poverty.

Despite his lack of education, he can perform mathematical calculations in his head so fast that he can put an engineer, an accountant or a math teacher to shame.

Ilarazag, for example, can mentally multiply a three-digit number by another three-digit number, churning out the correct answer even before you can say, "I give up."

The catch, however, is that he can do the mind-boggling feat only if the multiplicand is 365. Why? It is the total number of days in a year and thus a "calendar constant," said Ilarazag, who can also perform a host of other tricks involving the Gregorian calendar.

For his unique talent, Ilarazag, now 64, is called the "Calendar King" by friends, relatives and neighbors.

Among other things, Ilarazag, an able father of nine is fondly called, can give the name of the week on which a particular date falls.

In a heartbeat, he can also count the number of days from Jan. 1, 1901 up to any given date within the 20th century.

Before the business mind Ilarazag, an randomly selected "April 27, 2000," "Dec. 25, 1605" and "June 18, 1965." To determine the day of the week on which those dates fell, we used the date and time program of our laptop's OS.

When shown these dates, Ilarazag, without using a calculator, correctly and promptly answered: Saturday, Tuesday and Sunday.

Simple pero, just tell him your birth date and he will know in a second what day of the week you were born.

That sure may be said. Indeed, he had many other more difficult tricks up his sleeve.

As a matter of example, given only the numerical day, the year and the day of the week, he can tell the month or months in which that particular date belongs.

### Calendar tricks

For instance, if shown the following information—24, Thursday, 1986...he will very quickly identify the months of February, March and November. The reason that in 1986 only February, March and November had the 24th day falling on a Thursday.

Ilarazag said it was towards the end of the 1970s when, as a jeepney driver in Metro Manila, he met a college student who entered his friends with his calendar tricks.

His interest piqued, he began to study the numbers, dates and other pieces of information in the calendar.

It did not take long for him to confirm that what the college guy was doing—identifying the day of the week based on a complete date—was simple. In fact, he said, it was the simplest calendar trick.

But he learned this the hard way.

In the 1990s, he auditioned to join a "Calendar King" contest sponsored by a national television network.

"I was asked to name the day of the week for a number of dates. Very quickly, I was able to do it. But the young man in charge of interviewing me simply told me I did not make it. I asked him why. He said I was slow and that was it," Ilarazag said.

The rejection did not discourage him, though. On the contrary, it spurred him to develop better and more difficult techniques. "Lalo akong naggaling (I tried harder)," he said.

### Table

Ilarazag also invented a system to organize all the information in a calendar into numbers and arrange these into a table.

The table, he added, was not much different from a regular one except that it contained only numbers. No names of weeks or months, only numbers.

Each time he would answer a question posed before him, he would simply visualize the table of numbers he had committed.

What Ilarazag was able to create was impressive not only because it worked but also because it was made by someone whose math training did not go beyond the four basic operations in arithmetic—addition, subtraction, multiplication and division.

BALTASAR holding a copy of his memory calendar


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# Team from OIC to check peace pact enforcement

EUNEDA

COTABATO CITY—A 14-MEMBER DELEgation from the influential Organization of the Islamic Conference (OIC) will arrive in the country today to assess the implementation of the 1996 final peace agreement between the government and the Moro National Liberation Front (MNLF), a Malacañang official announced yesterday.

Jesus Dureza, national peace adviser, said the OIC team would be flying in Mindanao tomorrow and would be visiting the cities of Marawi, Cotabato and Davao, as well as the provinces of North Cotabato and Sulu.

It was expected to complete its visit by Sunday.

Dureza said the government was confident that the OIC team would find the implementation of the peace agreement to date

**Historic event**

"The visit is truly another historic event to see continuous to keep track of the full implementation of the government's commitments in the GRP-MNLF peace agreement," Dureza said.

He said the visit was "timely and welcome as it sees an encouraging mode in the ongoing negotiations between the government and the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF)."

The visit is also seen as a boost to the government's bid for an observer status with the OIC, the 57-member pan Islamic body that includes oil-rich Saudi Arabia.

Bai Eid Kabalo, MILF spokesperson, said the government's bid have tough calling because Saudi Arabia might oppose the recognition of the Philippines over the group.

**Observer seat**

During President Macapagal-Arroyo's recent visit to the oil-rich country, she asked King Abdullah to help the country win its bid for an observer seat, which the MNLF considered to hold.

Kabalo did not specify where the MILF information came from but added that aside from Saudi Arabia, Malaysia is also opposed to the Philippines' bid.

If Kabalo's claim is true, then the country's bid could fail according to political analysts here.

Saudi Arabia holds the presidency of the OIC's Committee of the Eight, which oversees the 1996 peace agreement.

The committee also includes Brunei, Malaysia, Senegal, Somalia, Libya, Indonesia and Bangladesh.

**Another candidate**

Kabalo said that even the MILF, which has also been seeking an observer seat to the OIC, was opposed to the government's bid.

"We have asked the OIC to put it on hold first because the peace talks are going on," he said.

Dureza refused to comment on Kabalo's claim.

"I will check on it first, it's so difficult to give statements on sensitive issues," he said.

Kabalo also accused the government of not fully implementing its 1996 agreement with the MNLF.

He cited the complaints aired by senior MNLF leaders in the past, including MNLF chair Nur Misuari.

Misuari is in jail following a failed uprising by his disgruntled followers in Sulu and Zamboanga last July more than 100 people. *Jeoffrey Maitem and Jeffrey Tupas, PDI Mindanao Bureau*


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# PHINMA Property Holdings Corporation Inaugurates Italian-Inspired Community

After completing the homeowning affordable development in Metro Manila, PHINMA Property Holdings Corporation (PPHC) inaugurates in Spazio Bernardo project in Quezon City today.

The 1.6-hectare property was sold and delivered in less than nine months from mobilization. It was launched September last year and the first batch of buyers started moving into the first Villa of a 126-unit, mid-rise condominium, making it to date its largest development. With PPHC's building system, Spazio Bernardo was completed in record time without sacrificing structural integrity and quality.

Despite being sold for as low as P640,000.00 for a spacious 30-sqm. unit, Spazio Bernardo offers features that are not typical of projects in this price level. Each unit comes with Australian aluminum windows, vinyl floor tiles on self-leveling concrete, pre-painted walls and ceiling, tiled toilet and bath, under kitchen cabinets and drying cages at the attic.

Spazio Bernardo also owes its success to the partnership with government. DEJOY, under the leadership of its Chairman and Philippine Vice President Noli L. De Castro, (Ng) (OIC) Fund under its President and CEO, Atty. Fedgidio Romulo S. Quintin and to its joint development partner the Quezon City LGU headed by Mayor Feliciano Belmonte Jr. This partnership has helped make decent and quality homes within the reach of the Filipino family.

Spazio Bernardo is an Italian inspired medium-rise condominium development that Meridian as Avenue in Quezon City just 9 minutes away from the MRT (EDSA North terminal). It is composed of 907 units in 11 buildings called Villas. Spazio is the Italian word for "place" or "space". Rightfully so, Spazio Bernardo is a residential enclave within city amidst charming landscaped gardens.

It is a community setting that is affordable and accessible to major malls, schools, hospitals, government institutions, parks and other commercial centers. Its location allows its residents to be close to their place of work, experience reduced travel time and spend more quality time with their families.

PPHC, is an award-winning and leading developer of affordable medium-rise housing in Metro Manila and Spazio Bernardo stands as its crown jewel in the PHINMA Group's 90th anniversary this year. Themed by its slogan "City Living Made Easy", PPHC communities are perfect for those who have set their sights on making their home in Metro Manila, close to their place of work. PPHC's projects are specially designed to be rented at a very affordable price and driven ever forward by its belief that Life Can Be Better for the Filipino.

## Spazio Bernardo's il Palazetto Beckons

With Spazio Bernardo completed in record time, PHINMA Property Holdings Corporation (PPHC) formally opens the doors of il Palazetto, the main clubhouse that offers its residents a place to socialize, relax and workout amidst the newly completed community.

Il Palazetto is centrally located within the landscaped quadrangle of the 1.6 hectare development. As you step into its entrance porch, the high sloping ceiling lends airiness and a feel of ample plenitude. It is perfect for social functions and has excellent views of a beautifully landscaped park. The park's fine flowing pattern of jogging paths features the dreamlike effusion to soak in the lush greenery and offers residents a place to relax. Quaint benches and lamps heighten the charm of the amenities area and complement the Italian-inspired architecture.

For those who want to keep fit and trim, il Palazetto also offers a gym where residents can do their workout routines. Bonding on the activities for the family, the amenities area features a playground where children can enjoy the day in a safe and secure surrounding. Il Palazetto and the park balance the concept of condominium living by in the metropolis by making the community a complete urban refuge.

Who would have thought that one can get all these features in affordable housing?

# Senate, House OK dialogue on Cha-cha

Front page A1

and widespread opposition from civic, religious and business groups, the administration in the past several weeks has begun raising the possibility of votes forming the Senate and the House of Representatives into a constituent assembly that will revise the Constitution.

The Senate has refused to support either the people's initiative or the constituent assembly. The House believes that it could convene the Senate opposition if the two chambers vote to convene themselves into a constituent assembly. The Senate believes this can only happen if the two houses, voting separately, approve the proposed change.

If the House insists on its interpretation of the Constitution on the second mode of amending the Charter voting as one unit, the Senate says it will contest this before the Supreme Court.

### 'Washing will happen'

The Gordon-Arroyo dialogue was proposed by Speaker Jose de Venecia to break the impasse.

"We agreed to sit down and dialogue ... but whether or not we will proceed with Charter change is another thing altogether," said Senate Majority Leader Francis Pangilinan.

"Whether or not such a dialogue will lead to a Con-ass (constitutional assembly) or to Cha-cha (Charter change) is something that remains to be seen."

Sen. Jinkee Pumaya said the dialogue would be nothing but "bobble," or "an exercise in futility."

"Nothing will happen to that dialogue because the issues are so complicated," Arroyo said.

The Supreme Court will be the one to resolve the issue of whether the Senate and the House should vote as one or separately, Arroyo said.

### Breakthrough

But Sen. Edgardo Angara, who supports the President's initiative, said the dialogue was a "breakthrough for constitutional change."

"So far, there has been a retrogressive and sun-like stance on either side," Angara said. "At least now, the barriers have been thrown down considerably."

Malacañang and administration allies said yesterday's meeting saw the restoration of "diplomatic ties," as well as "goodwill," not only between the two legislative chambers of the months of bickering over political controversies involving Ms Arroyo.

### 11 priority bills

The meeting agreed to push 11 priority bills in the remaining sessions days.

Press Secretary Ignacio Bunye have told reporters that the 11 measures included the 2006 national budget, the anti-rape bill, the fire-officers bill, tax relief for low-income workers, the rationalization of fiscal incentives, antimoneylaundering bill, the bill on the Bases Conversion Development Authority economic incentives, the bill on the reorganization of the Cordillera Administration Bureau, the automated election system bill, and the bill extending Agricultural Competitive Enhancement.

Bunye said the major accomplishment was the deal on the Charter change dialogue. "We're very happy that both houses agreed to send their respective committee chairmen to this investing and active leading [forward] to a very productive dialogue."

Ms Arroyo's political adviser, Gabriel Claudio, said the senators who attended the meeting were open to some amendments to the 2007 Commission on Elections budget, but also objecting to a new procedure suggested by the House that it could oversee the contingent assembly without the Senate.

### Meeting to iron out kinks

Arroyo, who attended Bunye's briefing, said he and Gordon agreed to start meeting today "to good faith" to "iron out kinks in the approaches available toward Charter change and, primarily, to agree first on what things are doable and what can be agreed on."

Gordon said that among the issues that the two committees would tackle were the question of "appropriate timing" to hold discussions on the proposal to convene Congress into a constituent assembly "so if we are going to meet as a constituent assembly."

"When we have gone with the rules, you can tackle what are the amendments that we can agree on," he said.

Asked whether he senses the Senate had now agreed with the House to convene Congress into a constituent assembly, Gordon said: "No, we only agreed to meet as committees to find out what are the things we can agree upon and then move on after that."

### Senate has not softened

Asked whether the dialogue managed to break the impasse between the Senate and the House regarding Charter change, Gordon said: "It breaks the ice, calms the waters, softening, and we can start talking again in terms of what we can do and that's important, that's a big, big push."

In an interview with Senate reporters later, Drilon denied that the senators had "softened" on the issue of Charter change. It was Malacañang, he said, that had backtracked.

Drilon said 44 Senators did not relish the idea of people's initiative during the meeting.

He said the President had apparently accepted the Senate's position that such an initiative was "patently illegal" because of the lack of an enabling law for its implementation.

Speaker De Venecia denied that the administration was abandoning the people's initiative.

"We will respect the decision and the wishes of the non-government organizations and the Liga (Union of Local Authorities of the Philippines) in pushing the people's initiative which has gathered almost 9 million votes, way to excess of [the required] 3 percent in each congressional district and 12 percent nationwide," he said. *With reports from Michael Lim Ubay and TJ Burgonio*

# 'Da Vinci Code' for adults only...

Front page A1

is directed by Ossie Brie Director Ron Howard and republic Tom Brie to re from Hanks).

The director is based on the best-selling novel by Dan Brown which "chronicles a murder investigation that could uncover a secret that has been protected since the days of Christ."

The R-18 rating for "Da Vinci" is surprising, according to a source in Columbia Pictures, the Philippine office of Sony Pictures Releasing (international producer of "Da Vinci").

Filipino employees of Columbia Pictures are not allowed by its head office in the United States to speak to the media. The Columbia source spoke on condition on the condition of anonymity.

"We will not appeal the R-18 rating because it might get an R on its second screening," the source said.

An R-18 rating, however, would mean a lot for the movie's bottom line because it would limit the record-winning film "Brotherhood Mamanyak" to the Philippines.

Ang Lee's "Brokeback Mountain" also received an R-18 from the MTRCB and, so much, was not shown in SM cinemas.

Columbia executives see the boycott as official statement that stated that "Da Vinci" earned "favorable ratings" in countries with large Catholic populations. It was "classified appropriate for children" in Poland (89.8 percent Catholic), France (81 percent), Ireland (75 percent) and Slovakia (68.9 percent), as well as in China, Japan, Romania, Finland, Norway, Israel, Czech Republic and Turkey.

"Da Vinci" was given a PG-13 in the United States and an R rating in Belgium and Spain.

### 'Mature discernment'

In the committee report, the MTRCB members explained that they found that the movie's "thematic, verbal and visual content ... requires mature discernment."

The committee that reviewed the film consisted of journalist Edmund Sicam, academician Rory Stolfus and lawyer Jun Mallonga. The screening was held in the Columbia Pictures office in Manila yesterday at 9 a.m. and the result was released by two to the afternoon of the same day.

"We allow screenings outside of the MTRCB office for sensitive films," board chair Marissa Laguardia explained. "The distributor requests for classic screenings for security reasons, to prevent piracy."

According to Laguardia, she sat through the "two-hour screening, as an observer, meaning I cannot vote" in the committee's decision.

Laguardia shared her personal views on the film in a phone interview with the Inquirer yesterday: "It will not sway the (Catholic) beliefs I've held since childhood. It's a suspense-thriller, a work of fiction. It can by nine to entertain."

### Film is balanced

In any case, Laguardia described the movie "as balanced ... In the end, Tom Hanks' character had uplifting (Jesus-ish) dialogue. He said that Jesus is a human who might also be entrusted to divine care — and what matters is what you believe in."

Laguardia opined that the film would open a healthy debate, "a discussion on what is true and fictitious. I believe it was explained well in the film that the Bible was written by men above 18. Only a mature mind can discern, determine and separate fact from fiction."

The committee report echoed Laguardia's sentiments: "Minors, who are highly impressionable, should not be allowed ... because of the elements (issues raised) on the divinity and celibacy of Jesus Christ and the issues/workings of the Catholic Church."

However, the film "didn't merit an R rating because it doesn't constitute a clear, exposure or direct attack on the Catholic Church or religion — arguments are tackled within an academic discourse or theoretical context by the movie's characters."

### No SM mall shows

Imperial told the business: "Broke-back earned a lot of money through-out its four-week run in theaters like Robinsons, but we could have doubled our box office grosses if only we had SM, which comprises almost 50 percent of the market."

In spite of the SM ban, the distributor "ordered 70 prints of 'Da Vinci,' the biggest number of prints we've requested in three decades," according to the Columbia source.

"Columbia will not have more screenings and more theaters in other cinemas, in compromise for SM's nonparticipation," said the source. "We will open as scheduled on May 10."

Ric Camalligan, first vice president of Old Letters Inc. which operates Old Cinemas, confirmed that SM would send by its E-18 ban. "Ah will not show it."

SM, in fact, pulled out the movie's trailers and posters while waiting for the MTRCB's decision.

### A work of art

Columbia's official statement, however, stated that "the Catholic Bishops Conference of the Philippines (CBCP) already went on record that it will not call for any action or censure or boycott the showing of the movie in local theaters."

The statement quoted Msgr. Pedro Quitorio, CBCP spokesperson, as saying "the bishops' view 'Da Vinci' as a work of art and not of science or history, so they do not see it as a threat to the teachings of the Church. If the faith of the people is strong, it would not be destroyed by one novel (or movie)."

In the same statement Rony Pizones spokesperson for Opus Dei, said that the release of the film "does not violate any provision of the Code of Canon Law." Pizones also distributed leaflets, including the Opus Dei, agree that the release of the film can provide a unique opportunity to educate people about their work and beliefs.

In fact, Opus Dei spokesperson Amy Magdalena commented to the media Columbia statement: "The more you hide it, the more people will look for it ... [what's needed is] personal guidance so when doubts [among the young] arise, you can fix them right away."

# No environmental ...

Front page A1

round a leading environmentalist of being "a major violator of environmental laws."

Laguna said Gina Lopez, executive director of the ABS-CBN Foundation Inc., and a vocal critic of the housing project, had no environmental clearance certificate (ECC) to show for the construction and operation of an ecopark at the La Mesa reservoir.

He said this means that the ecopark of Sanitary Kalikasan, a project of the ABS-CBN Foundation, had "no guarantee" that it had put in place "mitigating measures" to protect the watershed area.

### 'Not required'

But in a text message from Alviza, Lopez said two former environment secretaries, Elisea Gozun and Michael Defensor, as well as a former director of the Environmental Management Bureau, Gino Gabrielen, had advised him by Kalikasan that an ECC was "not required."

Lopez said Laguna was trying to divert attention away from the "multi-billion" peso deal involving the housing project geared to Metro Manila's water supply.

### 'Grave dilemma'

"The principal critic of the housing project is a major violator of environmental laws," Lopez said in a letter addressed to Metro Manila Development Authority Chairman Prospero Pichay.

And yet, he said, the retiree had "undertaken not to start development without first securing an ECC" and had "committed to implement all required engineering mitigating measures to forestall any contamination of the La Mesa reservoir."

The Norwegian is the precursor of the private Metropolitan Waterworks and Sewerage System (MWSS).

"This is the grave dilemma of the poor and disadvantaged who are inevitably pushed against the wall under the high-and-mighty yet often they want with inordinate ease," Lagman said.

He said Amable Hernandez, Metro Manila regional director of the NHB, certified on Monday that the ecopark "had not been granted an ECC ... nor had an application been filed with me."

A check with the Laguna Lake Development Authority also showed that it had not issued an ECC to the ecopark.

### Human activity

Lagman said the absence of an ECC was "significant" considering that the La Mesa Ecopark was "drawing thousands of visitors who swim, fish, hike, camp, rock and party in its facilities."

"This magnitude of human activity could presumably generate volumes of waste and discharge which can pollute the dam," he said.

Lagman said that even if the ecopark project was not covered by the ECC requirement, it was still required to submit an application for the issuance of a certificate of non-coverage because the EMB-DENR may still require the project proponent to "provide additional environmental safeguards as it may deem necessary."

He said there was no record that Sanitary Kalikasan had ever applied for the certificate.

But Lopez defended the ecopark, saying it was a joint project with the Quezon City government and the MWSS.

"With full confidence, I can say that everything we done the ecopark has the objective of safeguarding the environment," she said.

Lopez said the journalist should stick to the issue "instead of hitting at noble projects."

She added: "To allege that we are violating the environment? You should go and see how the ecopark is run and was built. Lagman is diverting from the main issue that his housing project will consummate the rainwork. This is the issue, not the ecopark."

# Lea's daughter born in RP May 16

Front page A1

boycott not to name the hospital where she gave birth.

The mother "is doing well and taking a nap," but the father, Robert Chinn, "is fuming mumup about the baby," Lea's mom Ligaya told the inquirer in a phone interview yesterday.

The baby, who will be christened Nicole Beverly, weighed 6.10 lb.

"The baby is a great Mother's Day gift for Lea and my mother-in-law," Robert said.

"She's a quiet baby, a good girl," Ligaya said of her first grandchild, who was sleeping on the same room as her mother. "She looks like a mixture of Lea and Robert. But she looks a lot like Lea when she was newly born. She's her clone!"

### Promise to mom

Lea and Robert plan to take their baby home tomorrow.

"Lea chose Nicole as [her baby's] first name because she had always liked it," Ligaya said.

Robert confirmed this: "Lea likes the song (Nicole)."

She second name is Beverly, after Robert's mom, because it was a promise we made to his family when his mom died three years ago," Lea told the Inquirer in an interview a month ago.

The birth of her daughter could very well be the toughest undertaking for Lea, who originated the role of Kim in "Miss Saigon," staged in the West End in London. She won only 17 when she won a Laurence Olivier award for her performance.

She later reprised the role on Broadway in New York, for which she won a Tony.

### 12 hours of labor

"It wasn't that bad really," Ligaya related. "It was her first child and the sensations are optional."

Aquiphard is the injection of an anesthetic into a person's spinal cord which partially numbs the abdominal region.

Lea started having contractions at 1 a.m., Ligaya recalled. "That's almost 12 hours of labor. That's very happy that she got her wish of delivering her first baby the natural way."

"Everything went smoothly," Robert recounted. "Nothing went wrong and she wasn't in a lot of pain. She's just tired. We're both very tired."

Lea, according to Ligaya, wanted to thank all her relatives and friends for all the prayers because she was able to get through this ordeal quietly despite of the pain.

### Made in RP

"It was made in the Philippines; it has to come out in the Philippines," she had said in an earlier interview. "My husband agreed with me on this. The great thing about giving birth in Manila is that we have a great support system here."

"I've been told by friends who are also mommies and they give me tips," she said. "When I'm getting stressed about something, they assure me, 'Don't worry about that, you'd be fine! I've been through that twice before. It's no big deal!'"

Lea said she would like to physically recover fast before doing any exercises or shows.

"I want to give myself the chance to get my old body back and regain my strength for singing. For personal plans, we'd like to take the baby to Disneyland, to meet family members, both on my and Rob's side. This is a very, very exciting time," she said.

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Bidding kits are available at the MCD Office and at Makati Office on **May 11 to May 24, 2006**, after payment of non-refundable fee of P500.00. All fully accredited/pre-qualified contractors as of **May 30, 2006** is qualify to bid. The pre-bidding conference will be held on **May 30, 2006** at the **VMC MSE Training Center at 2:30 P.M.** The commercial bidding will be announced thereafter.

For further inquiries, please contact **Messrs. Carlos S. Gatchalian** or **Don C. Labrador** at VMC Makati at telephone numbers **(632) 356-3000** to **07** and locals **2357** or **2200**, and **Mr. Ernesto "Tabo" Dilao** at VMC Makati Office at telephone numbers **(02)356-3402** and **(02)356-7000**, Extn (###) and our website **www.victoriasmilling.com** and e-mail us at **mcd@victoriasmilling.com**.

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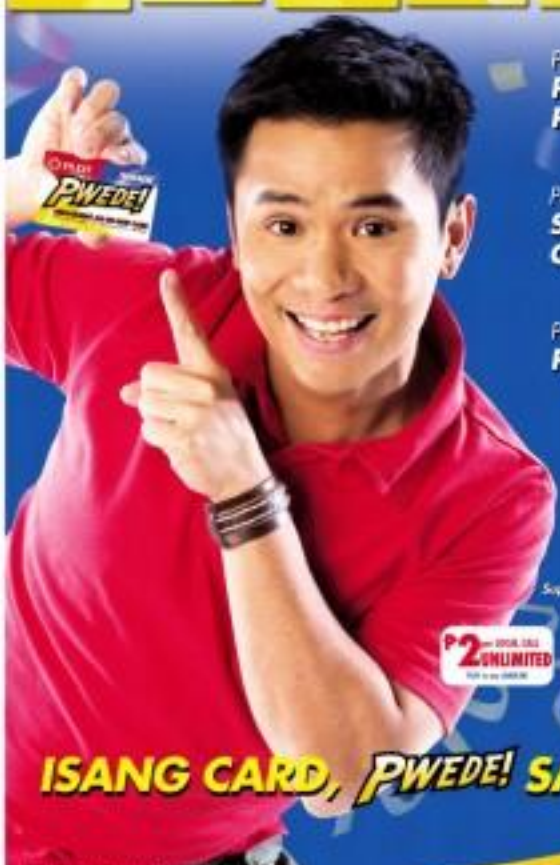

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CUSTOMS personnel examine the alleged Ecstasy tablets seized from a passenger of a UA-bound flight.

# 'Ecstasy' flight foiled

## Illegal drugs in grandma's cargo

By Nikko Dizon

A 74-YEAR-OLD FILIPINO WOMAN was apprehended yesterday by police and customs inspectors at the Ninoy Aquino International Airport (Naia) after almost 4,000 Ecstasy tablets worth an estimated P5 million were found in a box she was taking with her on a flight to the United States.

Leonora Jugo Edwards, a US immigrant, and her son, Marshall Sagbay, were set to fly back to New Jersey via Emirates Airlines flight EK 622 when they were stopped from boarding the plane. Both ended up missing their flight.

Edwards could be charged with violating the Comprehensive Dangerous Drugs Law or Republic Act 9165 if police laboratory results confirm that the tablets seized from her on Sunday contain ecstasy, officials said.

Edwards told reporters that she did not even know that the tablets were in the box. She added that Arsenia Magat, her Filipino neighbor in New Jersey, had called her up to ask if she would bring with her to the US a package that his friend would drop off at her house in Tandang Sora, Quezon City.

"Someone brought a shoe box to my house but I wasn't there. I just packed it with my other things inside my own box. And I know[n] what that shoe box contained, I wouldn't have taken it with me," Edwards said. The tablets were hidden inside nine cigarette packs packed into a shoe box.

But Capt. Marlowe Bilong Jr., a Customs police official, doubted aside Edward's explanation.

"Passengers should know what is in their luggage. If someone asks a favor to bring cargo out your door, open the package if it is sealed. It is for your own protection," Bilong said.

Edwards is now detained in the Philippine Drug Enforcement Agency office at the Naia.

# Check that LPG cylinder, NBI warns

By Margaux C. Ortiz

THE NATIONAL BUREAU OF INVESTIGATION has warned the public about the proliferation of unauthorized liquefied petroleum gas (LPG) cylinders following the seizure of P300,000 worth of LPG tanks bearing the brand names of several oil firms in Antipolo City.

NBI Intellectual Property Rights Division chief Atty. Ismo Yap said they conducted several raids on Monday based on complaints from Petron Corp., Pilipinas Shell Corp., Total Philippines Inc. and Liquigaz Philippines Corp.

NBI agents led by Senior Agent Dave Segundo confiscated nearly 250 LPG gas tanks from M&J Poultry Supply, RJ Eco and Poultry Supply, M.R. Reyes Rice Dealer, A.N.C. Gen. Merchandise and ADR Marketing. The establishments had allegedly passed off the tanks as products of the four oil companies.

# Girl, grandmom found dead in home

By Jocelyn R. Uy

A NINE-YEAR-OLD GIRL AND her grandmother were found murdered inside their home in Dumaguete City on Monday night.

Relatives of Carmen Buenaseda said her 74-year-old grandmother, Estrella, discovered their bodies inside the toilet of their house at 17 Presidente Quezon St., Money Villa de Manuel in Barangay San Valley at around 7 p.m., city police chief Supt. Ronald Ranillon said.

Initial investigation disclosed that the victims suffered head injuries which may have been inflicted by a blunt object like a pipe or a hammer, according to Ranillon.

The victims' neighbors told the police their late sighting of the elder Buenaseda was on Sunday.

Ranillon ordered his men to look for Buenaseda's son, 33-year-old Gilbert, who was nowhere to be found when relatives forced their way into the house, prompting the police to consider him as the main suspect.

Ranillon said the suspect was allegedly addicted to drugs.

"It is possible that he may have killed his mother and his niece in anger because he was not given money to sustain his drug habit. It is always like that in drug cases that we have handled in the past," he added.

The victims' bodies were brought to the Loyola Funeral Homes for autopsy.

# *Marine mammal turns up in creek*

A MARINE MAMMAL ABOUT NINE FEET long and weighing about 150 kilos, swam into a creek connected to the Manila Bay late off the Coastal Road in Parañaque City before noon yesterday.

It died several hours later on the way to the Manila Yacht Club for examination by marine experts, said Dr. Aprino Sebastian, officer-in-charge of the Manila Zoo's zoological division.

He said they have yet to determine whether the mammal was a whale or a dolphin. It was probably sick because it had several wounds and abrasions, Sebastian added. Jocelyn Uy

PARAÑAQUE City resident with surprise visitor.

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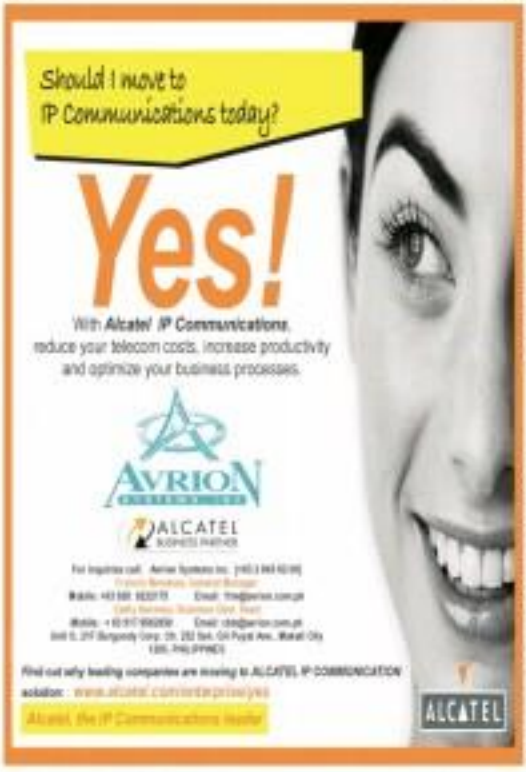



# 5 cops face robbery raps

By Leiga R. del Puerto

FIVE MANILA POLICEMEN, FOUR OF whom were arrested in an antidrugs operation in Tondo, Manila, last week, have been charged with robbery in Imard in the Office of the Ombudsman.

Charged by the Criminal Investigation and Detection Group of the Philippine National Police were PO3 Erwin Castro, PO2 Jonathan Ruda, PO2 Mike Fabian Dagpuyan, PO2 Dennis Opriasa and PO2 Marcialito Salazar.

Salazar is detailed in the National Capital Region Police Office-Regional Intelligence and Special Operations Office, while the rest are members of the Manila Police District's anti-illegal drugs division.

Salazar was the fifth policeman who allegedly got away when a team of agents from the CIDG and the Anti-Illegal Drugs Special Operations Task Force arrested the four policemen last Thursday in a parking lot on Jose Abad Santos corner Hermosa Streets, police said.

The area is a "well-known" trading place for illegal drugs, according to the CIDG.

A search of the policemen's car yielded a little of suspected methamphetamine hydrochloride or shabu which later turned out to be "tawas," a crystalline substance used as deodorant. The policemen claimed they were trying to arrest big time drug buyers by pretending to be drug pushers.

However, they had no idea that their "buyer" was working for the CIDG.

The five policemen were charged with robbery after they brandished their guns to get the cash—actually a combination of marked and boodle money—which the CIDG agent was carrying for the entrapment operation.

"At gunpoint, the armed men (Manila policemen) forcibly opened the door of the vehicle and attempted to snatch the buy bust money but failed due to the immediate of the CIDG operatives," said the CIDG charge sheet.

"The suspects claimed they were also police officers, conducting a police operation. However, when asked for documents and the names of their team leader, they failed to show any document and also failed to name their team leader," said Supt. Irene Isaf, a CIDG officer.

The four policemen, except for Salazar who fled, were released on their respective pending the filing of charges against them.

## MetroBriefs

### Museum to rise in Marikina

TO ENSURE that a place in the city's history, the oldest chapel in the oldest barangay in Marikina City is going to build a historical museum. The museum will be built beside the San Isidro Labrador Chapel in Barangay Jesus Dela Pena, the oldest barangay in the city. The church is where the first Mass in Marikina City was celebrated by Father Pedro de Feuncisa de Agoti in 1630. For this reason, the city celebrates its foundation day on the same date. Pasiguni Council chair Teresa Zulueta told the Marikina diary plan to display books and even relics and antiques of the museum that could enlighten residents about the history of the barangay. In the meantime, proponents are looking for donors to back the project. Edison C. Tandoc, Jr.

### 'Safe ka sa Diviseria'

MARIKINA CITY to provide assistance and security to thousands of students about to go to school supplies, the Marikina Police District will be launching its "Safe ka sa Diviseria" project tomorrow. Supt. Romulo Sapitula, MPD criminal investigation and detection unit chief, said they are expecting students and their parents to flock to Divisoria in the next few days to shop for notebooks, bags and other school items. "Through the program, we will ensure the safety of the shoppers and prevent common criminal incidents such as robbery and theft from taking place," Sapitula told the reporter in an interview. Sapitula said the police display operations policemen can thank Senior and the streets of Naga and Avanz Lane, where most of the snatch-ings incidents are reported. Abigael C. Dela

### Girl dies of injuries

THE TWO-YEAR-OLD girl who was allegedly dropped from the third floor of her house by her former boyfriend of her mother died of injuries on Monday morning. Rita Mae was brought to the Philippine General Hospital on Sunday night after her mother Ma'ala dropped her from the third floor of her house on A. Cruz St. Purok 4, Barangay Lower Bicutan, said Colonel Magdi Gascon-Vengco. The girl's parents just informed us this morning," Magdi told the Inquirer yesterday. As a result, have filed a murder charge against Ma'ala in the city prosecutor's office. Gascon-Vengco said the girl's mother, Teresita Tagulabang, is still out hard but when she got home from the hospital, the suspect allegedly picked up the girl while she was playing on the terrace and dropped her from the third floor. The police have yet to receive the results of the autopsy conducted on the victim but Magdi said the child died due to her bone she sustained in her skull. Joseph M. Ub


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# Libya made 'no concessions' to US for new ties

TRIPOLI—LIBYA YESTERDAY insisted it is now free of ties with the United States after Washington's announcement of a resumption of full diplomatic relations, emphasizing no concessions had been made to secure the rapprochement.

Foreign Minister Abdel-Rahman Shalgam welcomed the announcement—which also saw Libya's removal from the US list of states that sponsor terrorism—as a "new page" in relations between the two countries.

The foreign ministry's information chief Hassana al-Ghawwadi told a news conference "no concessions" were made to the US, saying relations would be "based on mutual respect and equality without interference in internal affairs."

US Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice had said Washington will soon open an embassy in Tripoli. Diplomatic ties were broken in 1981, two years after the US Embassy was sacked by radical student demonstrators.

Their resumption also comes two decades after alleged Libyan-sponsored terror attacks prompted the US to launch air raids on Tripoli, killing 15 people.

Rice said on Monday: "We are taking these actions in recognition of Libya's commitment to its renunciation of terrorism and the recent cooperation Libya has provided to the United States and other members of the international community in response to common global threats faced by the civilized world since Sept. 11, 2001."

Shalgam's own indictment that the top US diplomat would visit Tripoli soon, saying Libya "is waiting for an upcoming visit by Ms Rice and we are happy for this." Such a visit has not been scheduled by the US.

Assistant Secretary of State for the Middle East David Welch said in Washington US diplomatic representation in Tripoli will be elevated to the rank of ambassador within 21 days.

The improvement in relations and Monday's announcement of a resumption of full diplomatic ties follows Libyan leader Moamar Gaddafi's decision in December, 2003 to halt its program of weapons of mass destruction.

After Gaddafi agreed to open Libya's weapons production sites to inspection by US and British experts, Washington opened a special interests section in Tripoli in February, 2004. This was later upgraded to a "liaison office" the same year.

Shalgam said all differences between Libya and the US have now been "sorted out," and that Monday's announcement "will give a huge boost to economic and political ties" between the two countries.

The foreign minister said in a statement that "the resumption of full diplomatic relations between Libya and America is an important step destined to reinforce bilateral ties in the interests of world peace, stability and security."

Welcoming the decision in London, British Foreign Secretary Margaret Beckett said: "Libya has made significant progress since its historic decision in 2003 to renounce terrorism and eliminate its weapons of mass destruction." AFP

SHALGAM

## Jew-Arab couple fight to live together

By Allyn Fisher-Ilan

BASSILLIO, WEST BANK—JASMIN MASSAD and Osama Zatar fell in love, got married and hoped to live happily ever after—but don't tell Israel. Jew and Isra'a Palestinian Muslim and must live from windows to rooftops.

The couple's "Romeo and Juliet" struggle to live together is a rare tale of cross-border love in a land riven by years of violence between Israel and Palestinians.

Arizona, a 28-year-old classical dancer, met Lotai, 26, when they both were held at an Israeli animal shelter on the border between Jerusalem and the occupied West Bank.

They wed two years ago, but Israel has not granted Osama permission to live in the Jewish state. So they live in the West Bank city of Bassillio but can leave only three—Arizona's Israeli army-issued permit to cross into the Palestinian-run city a temporary.

Israel denies residence permits to virtually all Palestinian men under 35 under a law, passed during a five-year-old Palestinian revolt, aimed at tightening security and preventing suicide bombings. The Israeli military also generally bans Israelis from Palestinian-ruled territory.

It is rare for Jews to marry brides either in Israel or the occupied territories, and the few who do tend to keep quiet about a union frowned upon by many Israelis and Palestinians.

"We're in a Romeo-esque situation. All we want is the right to live together as a married couple," said Arizona, who wears an Israeli identification almost daily to work as a masseuse in Jerusalem.

"The authorities are constantly trying to keep us apart," said Zatar, a sculptor who sports a dark ponytail. "We love each other and plan a future together, if we can have one."

That "if" rings through their lives—their uncertain situation makes talking about buying a house, or having children impossible.

The couple have appealed to Israel's High Court to force the government to allow them to live together indefinitely, either in Israel or in the Palestinian territories.

Their chances of success are uncertain.

On Sunday, Israel's High Court narrowly upheld a law that denies Israeli residency in many Palestinian cases, mainly Israelis, rejecting appeals against a statute that critics say violates human rights and is racist.

With their lives on hold, Arizona and Zatar have struggled to make a decent living in Ramallah.

Zatar has been unable to find regular work, a common problem for many Palestinians in the West Bank's weak economy, even before a UN-led boycott on foreign funds to a government led by the militant Hamas group.

The couple's main income now comes from what Arizona makes serving tables at the Jerusalem coffee shop.

But the couple still dreams of a happy ever-after.

Arizona hopes to open a ballet school for Palestinian women—if Israel ever grants her a long-term permit to stay in the West Bank. Her family in Israel has accepted her marriage. Some of Zatar's relatives had accused him of betraying his people by marrying an Israeli, some they accept her.

"Many people look at me as a stereotype Israeli, as a potential soldier or settler, just like all Palestinians in the eyes of Israelis are potential terrorists," said Arizona.

"We hope to show everyone there is a different way." Reuters

PALESTINIANS Muslim Osama Zatar, 26, with his Israeli Jew wife, Jasmin Arizona, 25, near the West Bank village of Qarawet Bani Zaid. REUTERS

## WORLDBRIEFS

### 81 now dead in Brazil gang violence

SAO PAULO—A powerful gang that has launched co-ordinated attacks on law enforcement officials targets for the first time Monday, terrorizing Sao Paulo in three nights of violence that has left 81 dead, officials said. Some 1,140 attacks have taken place since Friday, in Brazil's wealthiest and most populous state, killing 36 police officers, 38 suspected criminals and four civilians. At least 48 police and prisoners by mass wounded, while 81 suspects have been arrested. Gangs targeted civilians for the first time Monday, torching 69 buses and attacking eight banks. The state government said. AFP

### Chavez defiant in face of arms ban

CHAVEZ

CARACAS—Venezuelan President Hugo Chavez on Monday brushed aside the US suspension of arms sales to his country, saying "We don't matter to us." "It's the enemies and I take a great capacity to do harm to the countries of the world," he said, referring to the US as "an irrational empire." The Venezuelan leader on a visit to London, also said his government will not support left-wing rebels in Colombia. AFP

### B&L lens cleaner recalled worldwide

LAVAL—A London court Monday that it was making worldwide sales of its Renu with Moisture Lock soft contact lens cleaner because tests showed that its solution could cause some users to get a potentially blinding fungal infection. The move followed the company's decision last month to suspend US sales of the product after federal health officials linked an unusually high number of the fungus cases to use of the lens cleaner. AFP


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The WORLD

Edited by Lawrence B. Quizon

# 6,000 US troops to border

WASHINGTON—PRESIDENT GEORGE W. BUSH ON Monday ordered up to 6,000 troops to the US-Mexico border in a bid to stem the flow of illegal immigrants into the United States.

"The need to secure our border is urgent," Bush said in a nationally broadcast speech, underscoring the importance of the issue.

He said up to 6,000 National Guard troops could be deployed on the south ern border for up to one year beginning next month.

The US president insisted that any effort to tighten America's permeable border must be coupled with a guest worker program for undocumented immigrants already in the country.

There are an estimated 11.1 million illegal migrants in the United States, more than half of them from Mexico.

Such a program, Bush said, would be part of a comprehensive immigration reform that would also provide a pathway to citizenship for many workers currently living "in the shadows of our society."

"To secure our border, we must create a temporary worker program," the president said, adding that creating a guest worker program acknowledges that "there are many people on the other side of our border who will do anything to come to America to work and build a better life."

The president's proposals added controversy to the immigration debate. Three protests in recent weeks have attracted millions of legal and illegal migrants and their supporters.

The demonstrations urged a humane immigration policy, and to passed a bill approved in December by the House of Representatives that would make illegal entry a crime.

Bush said his temporary worker proposal "would create a legal path for foreign workers to enter our country in an orderly way, for a limited period of time," and "would give honest immigrants a way to provide for their families while respecting the law." AFP

US BORDER Patrol agents on ATVs turn on sirens as they patrol along the US border with Mexico in this undated photograph. Bush announced plans to deploy up to 6,000 National Guard troops to the border because "we do not yet have full control of the border." AFP/CBP

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## *Middle path disappoints both sides*

By Monica Garay and Ralph Blumenthal

CHICAGO—AS JOSE E. MATOSKI FREEdom Bush's address from an apartment on this city's Northwest side, he shook his head fiercely at measures in the program of tamper-proof identification cards for legal workers, at the many members of armed border security, and at what he saw, in the end, as the majority of the future Bush friends for illegal immigrants like himself.

"I worry about the militarization and other bits this will mean more deaths on the border," said Jose E., 37, who sneaked to West Mexico nearly eight years ago and who asked that his last name not be used because he feared losing his job at a social services agency, deportation, or both. "And identification cards will only make it harder to survive and people will have to go further underground and work for cash."

In Houston, meanwhile, Lonnie Whitfield watched the president with equal skepticism. Whitfield, president of Texans For Immigration Reform, a group opposed to illegal immigration, swiftly took issue with several of Bush's premises, including an increase in the Border Patrol from 9,000 to 12,000 agents.

"This is very inadequate," said Whitfield, 76. "That's about the number of police in Fort Worth and Dallas." And unless the president said he planned to add 6,000 more by 2008, she shook her head, adding, "That's too long."

If Jose E. and Whitfield were any indication, Bush managed to disappoint people on both sides of the immigration debate on Monday night.

Each side saw hints of a further fight ahead.

Some supporters of tighter border security were said they did not oppose of the way they said Bush had signaled that he wants some of the nation's estimated 11 million illegal immigrants to become legal. On the other hand, some immigrants and their advocates said they did not agree with his clearly stated opposition to anything resembling "amnesty."

"I don't know what he is saying for someone like me," Jose E. said. "I have been working really hard. I have learned English. I pay taxes. I am not here in the country to bring problems. If I don't fit in to the government, he might gain legal status "it's going to upset me."

Whitfield was on guard against anything Bush might say about congressional bills that would allow illegal immigrants to legalize their status over time with a fine.

"My citizenship is not for sale," she said. "I don't like the idea that money can buy citizenship." AFP

Lito Tudoyo S. Matandoy
E-mail: sports@inquirer.com.ph

# SPORTS

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CLOSE GUARDING: The Tour's big guns ride together along Sumulong Highway in Antipolo City. Suntrust's Santy Barnachea, in yellow jersey, symbolic of overall leadership, second from left, pedals behind Elite Sport's Jaime Bautista as Tour's 8th-best Olivera and two-stage winner Anna Quinnie, also of Elite Sports, watch his back. AFP/MARIO

# Barnachea's lead shrinks

## Gorrantes outkicks Davadilla

By Hussein R. Candilo

LUCENA CITY—WHERE'S HELP when you need it?

Santy Barnachea couldn't find anyone willing, and his overall lead in the Tour Philippine Sunday Pathfinder 2006 yesterday diminished after Stage 5, where all riders rode literally came to the fast and dangerous Pandan hill finishes emerged as his closest pursuer.

Barnachea got into a shouting match with some of the Tour's rookies who refused to help out his significant pursuit as Reinhard Gorrantes outkicked Warren Davadilla at the end of the 144.5-kilometer, up-and-down, point-to-point Manila-to-Lucena.

It was the first career stage win for the 30-year-old Gorrantes, who timed 3 hours, 30 minutes and 21 seconds, the same clocking of the third-placed Feliciano who seemed to use and from Opel overall, now just 4 minutes and 7 seconds behind Barnachea.

Gorrantes' victory also marked the first time a non-skipper won a stage in the four Philippine Tours members Asiri Quimson of Elite Sports (Stages 1 and 4), Feliciano of Asi21 (Stage 3) and Jeanson Olona of Iloa (Stage 5) were the previous winners.

Gorrantes also pulled the top 10 climbing Daeshin Quimson at 18th, 22 minutes and 35 seconds off the overall leader.

Davadilla, whose quest for an unprecedented third win in the summit classic now has a dream, tried to attack the stage but missed a chance when bowling to the finish.

STAGE winner Reinhard Gorrantes celebrates with a supporter in Lucena City. BOY SANTOS

Barnachea, who was hoping to ride the leg as a birthday gift to his son Steven, who turned two yesterday, arrived in a 22-man third wave, 3:47 behind the top winners.

He now has a total time of 21 hours, 21 minutes and 21 seconds heading to the winding of the short edition of the Tour.

Quirino, who helped Barnachea widen his lead to 7:29-over Olona after Stage 4, was also in that group like Olona, who dropped to third.

"I rode with a lot of rookies," Barnachea, who has been wearing the yellow jersey of overall leadership since Stage 2, said in Filipino. "They are young but already too-opportunistic."

The will inner field of 80 riders have three more stages left with the event to be decided in the semi-run starting with today's trek to Sta. Rosa, Laguna, from here via the dreaded "Talisay Hill" in Nagtalon, Quezon.

### Cossack Riders back on top after five grueling stages

LUCENA CITY — COSSACK STEEM PET SOLVE 900-en inside the top 20 in Stage 5 of the Tour Philippine Sunday Pathfinder Pinoy 2006 from Manila to this landing city yesterday to reclaim the overall team lead from Iloilo 900 contender Alberto Amistoso and Iloilo Visayans Hatchery in the field and with a double-digit (13 hours, 20 minutes and 27 seconds). Cossack secured a 13-minute and 28-second advantage over Iloilo with its selection of 67-20-30-149. As 21-already-seven-time-stage-win skipper Rustarid Feliciano accounting (master effort of 14:08:16.592 to be in their overall 20:11:03 cumulative of the race.

# Giants continue mission under pall of gloom

THE TWO-GAME TIME SLOT MONday morning at the Addie Sports Center at The Fort in Taguig should have been filled with echoes of bouncing balls, screeching shoes and shrill whistles.

Instead, the gym was dark and completely silent. The noise that should have been generating there at 9 a.m. took the day off because no one, it seemed, felt like playing.

Yet, weren't in the proper mind frame," said Pembrook coach Ryan Gregorio, who canceled the Giants' practice a day after forward Eugene Tejada suffered a severe neck injury in what could be the worst on-court accident to ever hit the pro league.

Had Tejada not fallen limp on his back during a rebound battle against Red Bull Sunday night, the Giants' worries would have been centered on how to grab their other outright semifinal slot in the Gran Matador Brandy-PBA Philippine Cup today at the Araneta Coliseum, when they will face the Talk 'N Text Phone Pals.

Gregorio's worries would have been simply on how to work around a Phone Pals squad boosted by major trade acquisitions using a roster shrunk down by the absence of Korby Raymundo, Jun Gaspar and Noy Castillo due to injuries.

Gregorio also had to worry about the state of his team. "It's hard to tell (if the players are okay). I just told them we have to stay together, we have to fill each other's spirits."

Perhaps Gregorio can simply wear a page off Jim Barnagay Cimbol's playbook and use it against the Phone Pals in their 7:35 p.m. encounter. The Kings, playing without starters Dennis and Ildefonso and Yeng Guiao, had back-up players Andy Seigle and Ronnie Matias, managed to surprise the Phone Pals last week.

Cimbol, which plays Coca-Cola in the 4:40 p.m. lunnel on Mon Caguioa's 42 points to upset a Talk 'N Text squad heated up by Jun Abalos and Boboy Rimada.

But the Kings, at least, did not have any mental or emotional worries to deal with. For the Giants, getting that other outright semifinal slot—the Tejada incident aside—has already affected the first one—worries too difficult when put beside the tragic event that befell their teammate.

—Jasmine W. Payo

# Tortillos ruin Painters' semis bid in overtime

By Jasmine W. Payo

MARVIN CRUZ TOOK FULL CONTROL IN overtime as Ginebra Coca-Cola foiled Talk 'n' Minor's bid for an outright semifinal berth with a 76-73 victory in the PBL Unity Cup yesterday at the San Andres Gym in Manila.

More importantly, the Tortillos clinched the twice-to-beat advantage in the quarterfinals after wrapping up their elimination campaign with a third loss in 6 assayed.

Cruz went scoreless in the fourth quarter but shot nine of his 13 points in the extra period.

JC Quitaleza teamed up with Cruz to finish with 12 points, 11 rebounds and three blocks.

"Like my son sometimes," said coach Nelson Asoy. "We caught fire or blew hot/hot off right."

Harbour Centre secured the last quarterfinal berth by sipping Talk'n in overtime, 81-76.

MARVIN Ortigueza (right) of Talk n' Text threatens an attempt by Ginebra Coca-Cola's JC Quitaleza in yesterday's game.

# Consistency name of game for leader Sy

TYRONE'S amazing domination of the opening three rounds gave him a big head start on the battle for the overall championship in the Asian Seniors Tour.

But the 58-year-old Filipino-Chinese still had to overcome his early mistakes, avoid big to Speedrock ten-shot lodgers Ho Chiem.

With this year's series featuring three races in each leg, little mistakes in the time trials and early rounds could prove costly, said Uy Gaisen, adding consistency will be the key if Sy wants to secure himself the overall winners at season's end.

"My secret to be consistent is not to make mistakes," said the 36-year-old Uy Gaisen. "If is good Tyrone is now more matured. He has learned a lot from his experience the previous year and we expect better results this time."

Uy, 33, choked several times under pressure in last year's series, especially in the last two legs at the Batangas Country Club, and eventually finished fourth overall, a spot behind third placer Jaime Winslow of England.

This time, however, he has approached each race with confidence, aware that "whatever problems I encounter with the car will be fixed."

"If there's problem(s) during the race, I will have confidence that (someone) can help," said Sy, who will go into the next three rounds one stroke at the Global International Circuit in Clark with his points. "The title is bigger if you're no aggressive and you wind up with no points."

Series newcomer Jillian Bonilla of England is running second with 202 points built around two second-place finishes at the PBC, while his teammate, Winslow, is running third with 52.

# Bata, 4 other Filipinos advance

BALL OF FAMER EFREN "BATA" Reyes led four other Filipinos in the winners' bracket of the 2006 Dupont-Accu 9-Ball Championship (formerly SCA Open) at the Riviera Hotel-Casino in Las Vegas, Nevada.

The 51-year-old Reyes beat American Lou Butera, 11-9, in the opener, teaming along compatriots Dennis Orcollo, Ance Panlo, Jeanne Sandiegan and Rodolfo Luat.

Reyes, fresh off his victory in the 2006 IMC team 9-ball Tour leg in Vietnam, will meet American Allen Hopkins in the next round.

Orcollo, gold medalist in the 2005 Southeast Asian Games, local former world title-shot champion Rubilen Amit of Italy, 11-5, and will face American Tony Crosby, 11-7 winner over Yuta Hiramatsu.

Series runner-up Efren "Bata" Reyes

Panlo topped former US champion Rich Marcel, 11-8, and Canadian No. 2 player Luc Bilodeau, 11-8, while Sandiegan tripped Joey Gumabao, 11-7.

—Marlon Bernardino

# MVBA: Lhuillier tackles Toyota

GAME TODAY (Alonte Sports Center, Biñan, Laguna)
4:30 p.m. — Lhuillier vs Toyota Otis

GAME YESTERDAY (Rizal Memorial Coliseum)
Cebu City 125, Lhuillier 97

CEBU CITY—Lhuillier's "Top Seed" Lhuillier Kwarta Padala-Cebu begins its championship drive when it hosts Toyota Otis in Game One of their best-of-three semifinal series in the MA. Ramos Padala Mindanao-Visayas Basketball Association (MVBA) Fire Conference today at the New Cebu City Coliseum.

The Jeanmer of Michel Lhuillier and Coach Raul Alcaraz, however, will be without top gun Stephen Padilla, who was recalled to the PBA.

Tomorrow, the Montreal Traders of Mayor Thadeo Chiaze and coach Eddie Wadas host the Cebu Landmasters Elasto of walter Joe Sobrevias and coach Jun Yan in Game Two of their Visayas Division semifinal series in Mandaue City.

Both squads were still playing their series opener at press time. The game was tied at a point-by-by Nil Francis Padilla, Chukong Shopping Lines, Kaiser's Spring Drinking Water, Panasonic Motors and Solgen's Lines.

# 2006 Tour can't quench the original thirst

BARE EYE

*Recah Trinidad*

DAKUNG the great sportsman Loy Pelaez, founding commissioner of the Philippine Basketball Association, celebrates his birthday on Friday, accomplished people who had served under Mr. Pelaez, including television impresario Rahmag Ilaw and boxer Rudy Salud, founding secretary of the World Boxing Council and himself a very successful PBA commissioner, amend their wishes to their former master and big boss. He wished you, sir!)

* * *

RAFFEN DAMORLLA, DEFENDING CHAMpion, is very much in the race. How soon the 2006 long given the reign label Dutch Post Road Cycling championship, has not dashed her up the marathon bike wars of past runners?

Because it lacks the big ingredients, namely a former champion who joined this year's cycling caravan before breaking off after only three days.

Or say he finds the current Tour sour upon word by finishing deprived of the old lich. Juice and fizz?

But isn't Damorlla, seeking his third title, not big enough to repeat the big challenge and excitement over the field?

Well, he explains, Bahjah Pinoy doesn't happen to be the Tour de France and Damorlla is definitely no Lance Armstrong, seven-time winner of the world's toughest multi-staged cycling marathon.

* * *

Our friend, a former five-time winner of the Tour in the '70s, begs that his name no longer be mentioned here.

He explains that race organizers, who happen to be his friends, did not want it to appear that the sponsors were not getting their money's worth in this year's race.

Sorry, but that's exactly what's happening in the 2006 Tour. Sponsors have every reason to feel shortchanged.

Despite the glowing prose of sports writers from all the national dailies, this year's Tour could not live up to old expectations.

At least, the event did not consume itself and the overall title has remained anybody's once after the usually exuberant Baguio stages.

There'll still be something worthy of the chase, our friend adds, when the race goes through the so-called Tebbing Hungry, a mountainous and hilarious contest uphill stretch.

But, going to the winning ingredients, it appears the 2006 Tour has started to lose its novelty this early due to the absence of several tried-and-tested stars.

Most of these power riders, reports our friend, like the members of the Pagtet team, failed to join the two-day qualifying race because they were out competing in Malaysia's Tour de Langkawi.

Singled out among the missing stars in the 2006 Tour were Verne Figueira, Lloyd Reynante, Bernard Lanza, Albert Pilimero and Sherwin Carrera. 2004 Tour Pilipinas champion Reynante Tanguilig is also now in the Middle East working.

That's a hefty field indeed, as big maybe as the finish of the Tour itself.

Actually, this discrepancy should have been remedied for the Tour to retain its original color and excitement.

Now, it doesn't help any that crucial ends is being hidden from both the sponsors and the public.

* * *

There's a point closer here. If they are not exposed and subsequently checked, these flaws could lead to the numerous spectacular disintegrating, as had happened before. The Tour is then abruptly stricken out of the annual sports calendar starting in 1999 until its revival in 2002.

There's an urgent plea from concerned sectors.

They should prevent another deviationist, if not entirely lame, marathon bike race.

Yes, the Tour is the only Tour many see be so serious and sickening in the rampant cheating that has been swallowed by the fanfare in the recent Bikerang Pambansa.

But no excellent hopeful souls can in the remote provinces, one year without a Tour could be equal to being jilted.

Bicycles, although only seasonal, should not be allowed to rot by and fade.

Summer without a colorful Tour would be empty and lonely in a restless summer.

## On Eugene's bedside

IN HUDDLE

*Beth Celis*

THE WOODLUFKIN basketball team was at Eugene Tejada's bedside Monday afternoon at the Makati Medical Center where the ager was undergoing a battery of tests to determine the extent of his spinal injury.

The freak accident that occurred during the last quarter of the game against Red Bull last Sunday instantly rendered his body numb, immobilized from the neck down to his toes. It took 40 minutes before he could be transported to the hospital for treatment because there was no standby ambulance assigned to the Valenzuela Cagers.

"I didn't want to hurt him moved unless it was done by paramedic because it might aggravate his injury. News said if we had to battle the game. A life's at stake here," said Pembrook board representative Sara Shuler, who is set to retire from his post at season's end.

Mong Pineda said there's disgust he almost kicked a disgruntled customer which was brought to the court, in place of a member, to cover Eugene out on the game could only close.

It didn't help any that PBA commissioner Noli Eala was not around when the unfortunate happening accident—the worst I've seen since the inception of the league in 1975—occurred. He had left the venue early, probably tired from his protracted vacation in Boracay where he is now stranded for days.

* * *

According to Mong Pineda, the result of the MRI (magnetic resonance imaging) revealed a fracture and a dislocation in Tejada's spinal column, near the area of the neck. Applying traction has somewhat improved the sensory functions of his upper limbs and body.

The doctors have yet to determine if surgery is indicated, pending further tests.

Upon being apprised of the tragic accident, the PH fan's parents who are based in San Francisco, California, immediately booked a flight to Manila. Eugene's father is a former sager himself while his mother is a nurse.

Also constantly at Eugene's bedside is his girlfriend Jenny Hernandez, who works with ABS-CBN.

"Kinawito nga si Jenny, maalala daw sabihin sa kanya si Eugene kasi dapat he's homesick and misses his family in America very much. I suppose that's when Eugene has been feeling after the accident. And parents' crying sweetpeak," Mong Pineda revealed.

* * *

John Aquino, a supporter of teammates Dale Abercrombie demand reports the other day that the clubber had abandoned his quest to reach the summit of Mt. Everest.

"Speculation that Dave had quit must have started when he crossed paths with the expedition leader of the 7 Summits Club, Dayanara Jang-ajo, as Small Summer para makipagkumustahan. Si Dale lang ang kumain. Not long, kinse-alive, umeri agresif like wildfire that Dale had quit," John explained.

As of yesterday, Dale was 8,000 meters up on the slopes of Everest, ready to start his summit of the summit. So was Reno Cardenas, on the opposite side of the mountain.

"If everything goes well, Dale should be able to unfurl his banner of Slimmit by this week," John said.

* * *

Vince Tene of La Salle Green Hills and Kevin Adler Gazebon of Mentex have been chosen by Alkilin Philippines to represent the country in this year's Adidas Superstar Camp which will be staged in Chinese's capital, Beijing, this month.

According to Adidas country marketing head Derek Cardinal, the two belonged to a select group culled from among hundreds of candidates. They were chosen on the recommendation of coaches.

"They belong to the cream of the crop," Derek said.

This year, the world representatives will be drawn the way to strength and fitness. "Adidas has a different theme every year. Playing stronger and longer is the theme this year," Derek said.

## SPORTSWATCH

### 70 fights at SJC today

THE BATTLE FOR THE NEW CROWN COMMENCES as members of the Philippine AGGRO Cocker of the Year title heats up today with the staging of another 3-cock derby at the San Juan Coliseum. The 170-fight program is sponsored by Dagupan Cockers Club Inc. Ramon Bichara and Tony Fernando, with their entry Sportsa's Fisting, remains the contender with 24.5 points, Jun Tupaz and his American partner Lone Ranger of Mountain Lil' Cowgirl have 19 points.

### Makati hosts 3-cocker

MAKATI SOLIDUS'S CHAMPIONSHIP NEWS! Several fellas via a special 3-cock derby featuring 36 fights, Tuesday 1:30 PM at Delta Ave. A guaranteed prize of P700,000 will go the winners of the meet formerly owned by the PCU Sports and Economic Corp. Entry fees P5,000. Lucil Bonday, the Mediterranean brothers of Dasmariñas topped the Eastern Gold 3-cock derby when their entry Uber Convoluted turbo won. For inquiries, call 880-2045 or 505-6471.

LTN Mangalahoon of Royal Northwoods plays out of a sipunia at the Eagle Ridge Golf Club.

# De Jesus, Yee pull biggest NTCC wins

MATCHES TODAY (Fri on.)

(AM) Lyra Tordesar (Solon) vs Jhun Lagrar (Cadet Mo); Elsie Sales (Aguinaldo) vs Erica Gale (St. Dominique); Kevin Ira San Eugui Dejay vs Dante Jones (Bulacan/Tagaytay Midlands Golfer); Ely Gonzalez (Pampanga) vs Jhun Ramos (Ilocos Norte).

(PM) Jhay Mayo (Manila Golf) vs Daily Villa (Cebu), Tyson de Jesus (Tagaytay Highlands) vs Jhon Gar Cappala (Makati), Edward Tan (Manila Southwoods) vs Kevin Yuchin (Antipolo), Jan Santiago (Eagle Ridge) vs Jack Jong Ho (Santiago).

By Jong Arcuino

GEN. TRIAS, CAVITE—TOOTHIE DE JESUS OF Tagaytay Highlands and Edmond Yee of Manila Southwoods shared out a pair of victories each yesterday to barge into the quarterfinals even as top seeds Serge Brave and Cyrus Rodriguez stayed on track in the National Tournament of Club Champions at the Eagle Ridge Golf and Country Club here.

De Jesus, once a top badminton player who finished second to Marc Mendez in a heady No. 1 L, made short work of Bagaoisan and Mo. 2008 Lawrence, 7 and 6, in the morning then produced the biggest upset of the tournament as presented by Hongkong and Shanghai Banking Corp. and becomes Gold by ousting second seed Alex Bee Gaisen of Mitsuoka, 3 and 2.

He disposed of Sid Plata of Summit Point, 3 and 2, in his first match. He went back to his hotel room, took a quick lunch and got his mental mind in time to show the door to Alex in a surprising 7 and 6 blackbath.

Daily Villa of Valley Golf also shone, stunning pre-tournament favorite Mike Yee, 1 up.

The other top guns advanced, however with Reyes of Manila Golf shrugging off a gutsy Rudy Arzaga of Filipinas, 3 and 1, and his counterpart in the ladies division, Bridgette of Riviera, earning the quarter win of the day: a 3 and 2 rout of Isabel Maggie Rivera.

Also reaching the round-of-8 were Nic 2 Park Jong-soo of Eastridge, Oliver Gay of Tagaytay Midlands, Isidro Teodoro of Alabang and Jan Tandoganan of Eagle Ridge.

The other survivors in the ladies action were Mona Lagasca of Capitol, Marie Isabel of Apalit Golf, Melen Go-dee of Alabang and Ria Rivera, Brenda Mirasol of Antipolo and Tiff Ramos of Golf of Eagle Ridge, Kathleen Yu of CDO C.C. and Lyn Mangalahoon of Royal Northwoods.

Rivera earned the day's biggest comeback as she rallied from four down to beat Orgels, 2 and 1.

## Bernis shows way with 71; Villaroman up by 1

JUN BERNIS TIED A STEADY ONE-under par 71 and then watched Neal Echaves bode out with a bogey to enter a one-stroke lead at the start of the second leg of the Runaway Amateur Golf Tour at the Sunnata Point and Country Club in Lipa City.

Bernis, vying to regain the form that won him two major titles in 2004, birdied back to back from No. 1 but dropped a stroke on No. 7. The sub-spoker Gen Salinas finished settled for pars the rest of the way for totaled of 71-36.

Sydney Dellad No. 17 to earth up with Bernis at one stroke, only to fall back again with that bogey on the 18th.

Joseph Ramos Elle Jong-seok also enjoyed within striking distance with a 73.

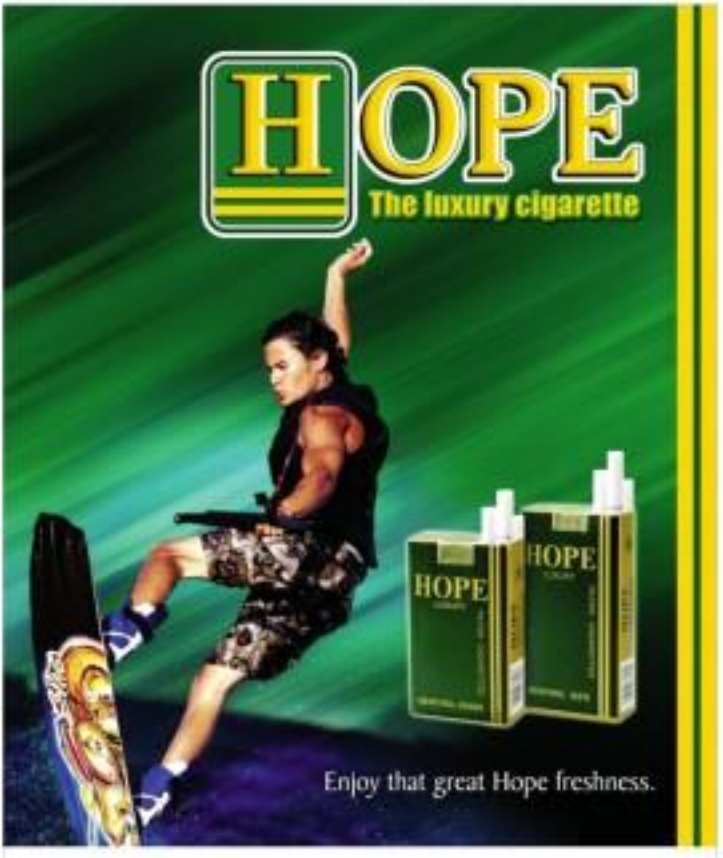
Former 80 Ladies champion Carmelene Villaroman chica a Two-likewise par-1 conquest lead over defending national titlist Beverly Mendoza in the ladies division.

Lucy Landico made a 79 for third.

Gary Sales carded a 74 for fourth among rest while National Caddies Open champ Joseph Labaja par to naught at 75, in a tie with Lito Bayot.

Grant Sapord, meanwhile, carried an 81 to gain a two-shot lead over Ruth Marchaves and four up on Lee Sun Ae in Class B, while Jane del Rosario showed the way in Class C with at 86 for a three-stroke lead over Felicia Medalla, who had a 90. Mary Dalisday and Jude Amen were tied for third with 108s.

In men's Class C, William McCue and Pepe Mendoza both shot 82s to share a two-shot lead, while Rolando Reed sizzled with an 86 to lead Class D by five.




Government Warning:
Cigarette smoking is dangerous to your health.

SPORTS

# Cavs tie series

## Mavericks push defending champs Spurs to the edge

**CLEVELAND, OHIO—THE CLEVELAND CAVALIERS BEAT THE Detroit Pistons at their own game on Monday, using a smothering defense to win Game Four 74-72 and level their Eastern Conference best-of-seven series at 2-2.**

LeBron James had 22 points, nine assists and eight rebounds and made two of four free throws in nine wicked clutch minutes as the Cavaliers rallied from a 10-point deficit in the fourth quarter to defeat the Pistons on Wednesday in Auburn Hills.

In Dallas, Jason Terry scored 32 points as the Mavericks beat the San Antonio Spurs, 123-118, in overtime, putting the defending NBA champions on the verge of elimination.

Dallas leads the Western Conference series, 3-1, with Game Five in that series back in San Antonio on Wednesday.

Detroit carried a 59-52 lead into the fourth quarter, but the Cavaliers played some of their best defense of the series and outscored the Pistons 23-13 in the final quarter to establish win.

The Pistons led by as many as seven early in the fourth quarter, but a 12-0 Cleveland run opened the way for the win, with James getting two chances for two free throws with 1:02 left and again with just 1.3 seconds left on the clock.

"The Pistons are feeling the pressure," James told reporters after the game.

After two relatively easy wins in the opening two games of the series, the Pistons had been orders of a lunch against the underdog Cavs.

Rasheed Wallace, who had guaranteed a win for his Pistons, sprained his right ankle and watched the last few minutes from the bench, but was confident despite the loss.

"There's no way in hell they beat us in a series," Wallace said. "They played well. I give them credit. We lost."

Eric Snow had 12 points for the Cavaliers...10 of them in the second half—and Anderson Varejao added 10 more.

The Cavaliers flyto St. Louis on Tuesday to attend the funeral of Larry Hughes' 20-year-old brother Justin before going on to Detroit. Hughes has missed the Cavs' last two games to be with his family.

In Dallas, the Mavericks finally prevailed in a game that was tied 20 times and featured eight lead changes during regulation. Reuters

LEBRON James (left) of the Cleveland Cavaliers tries to spin up a shot against Ben Wallace (right) of the Detroit Pistons. AP, EPA

WORLD CUP

# Argentina leaves off '02 'losers'

LONDON—GONE ARE ARGENTINA'S 2002 losers, ousted by the debacle in their home town ago, and in come Jose Pekerman's junior champions.

Coach Pekerman, who had already turned a solid shoulder to 2002 captain Juan Sebastian Veron, left out former defense stalwarts Javier Zanetti and Walter Samuel when he named his World Cup squad on Monday.

He picked a squad littered instead with players who have won the World Youth Cup or the Olympic Games gold—and in some cases both.

"This is a very strong group. There's a historic potential and that's because of the riddance of Argentine football," Pekerman told a news conference in Buenos Aires when he named his squad.

The only players in Pekerman's squad who went to Asia in 2002 under his predecessor Marcelo Bielsa are Roberto Ayala, who one to actively his record World Cup bonanza of injury, midfielder Pablo Aimar and Juan Pablo Sorin, both key figures in Pekerman's successful junior teams, and striker Hernan Crespo, a reserve in Japan.

Pekerman's new guard, looking to win the World Cup for Argentina for the third time, is led by Inter and Juan Roman Riquelme. Reuters

**UEFA final on ESPN**

Meanwhile another marquee matchup looks on with European club soccer's most glittering prize at stake.

Spanish powerhouse Barcelona clashes with English side Arsenal at the UEFA Champions League Finals goes unbelievably tomorrow at 2 a.m. live and exclusive on ESPN.

Arsenal booked its place in the Champions League final with a 1-0 aggregate win over Spanish Villarreal. Barcelona is the odds-on favorite to lift the hugely lucrative World Footballer of the Year Roundabout.

# 'Brown and Out' Knicks headed for divorce?

NEW YORK—THE DYSFUNCTIONAL New York Knicks family may be heading for a basketball court divorce, complete with a whopping settlement for out-to-long-ago-adored coach, Larry Brown.

So screamed the headlines of New York's newspapers, saying the ousted Knicks, who lost the most games in their storied history last season despite leading the league in payroll, were looking to show Brown the door even though he had four years remaining on his contract.

The Knicks had no official comment.

"Could be Brown & Out," said the Post.

"Have to Bust Brown Town," said the Daily News, citing sources saying club owner James Dolan is stalling a move to buy out the Hall of Fame coach, a native New Yorker who was brought home less than a year ago to coach the Knicks.

The hoopla that accompanied Brown's five-year, $50-million deal announced last July turned to horror as a mismatched Knicks roster bumbled to a 23-59 season and Brown superannuated with 42 different starting lineups while publicly criticizing his players, most notably guard Stephon Marbury. Reuters

# BUSINESS

Editor Raul G. Marcelo • Assistant Editor Lotta Corvil S. Herbosa

# Japan firm plans P5-B coco facility in RP

## 600,000 hectares to be needed for coconut plantation

By Christine A. Saplacan

TOYO ENGINEERING CORP. (TEC) OF JAPAN IS PLANNING TO put up an integrated facility in northern Luzon to produce the bio-fuel coconut methyl ester, the head of the Philippine Coconut Authority (PCA) said yesterday.

The project is estimated to require close to P5 billion in investment.

Officials of Toyo Engineering were looking at planting new coconut trees on some 600,000 hectares, with the yields to be transformed to coconut methyl ester for export to Japan, said newly installed PCA Administrator Oscar G. Garin.

Japan now widely uses methyl esther as fuel additive.

"They (Toyo Engineering Corp.) have consulted the agency as to how they could develop the project, which could give our replanting program a boost," Garin said. "Toyo Engineering currently has a temporary facility and conducts

(BUSINESS, B3)

WHAT'S INSIDE

Gov't debt stood at P1.96T in end-Feb

Gov't to borrow P164.5B in Q3

## Smart seeks tax perks for 3G project

By Dodee L. Lazo

THE COUNTRY'S BIGGEST CELLULAR PHONE firm would spend as much as P14.6 billion for its third-generation wireless network—almost three that of its closest rival—over the next three years, company officials said.

Speaking to reporters on Tuesday, Smart Communications Inc. chief financial officer Anabelle L. Chua said the amount was an "aggressive" estimate that the company would present before the Board of Investments in applying for a tax holiday package.

Despite its bigger investment, however, Smart was beaten to the punch by Globe, which was granted a P2.3-billion tax incentive earlier this month for its pioneering efforts in setting up a 3G network in the country.

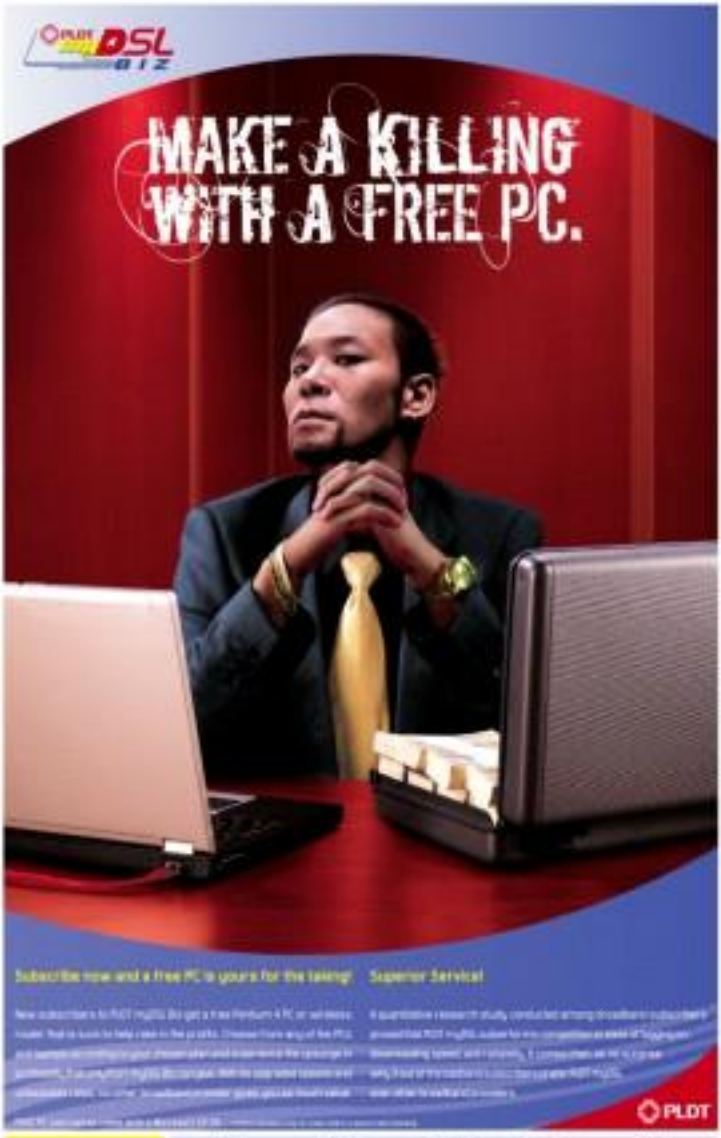
Globe had pegged its investments in the new technology at P5.48 billion.

Chua said that Smart's investment in 3G might rise to as much as P22 billion over the next six years, depending on how the service is received by the market.

"This will be funded with internally generated funds," she said, although a "small portion" of about 20 percent may come in the form of debt.

To date, about 200,000 subscribers are us-

(SMART, B3)



# JG Summit profit up 417% to ₱3.88B

## Sale of URC shares boosted revenues

By Elizabeth L. Sanchez

GOKONGWEI LED JG SUMMIT Holdings Inc. and yesterday its net income surged 417 percent in the first quarter to ₱3.88 billion from the previous year's ₱748.4 million, boosted by the sale of shares in branded foods unit Universal Robina Corp.

Last February, URC completed a primary and secondary offering of its common shares to institutional and local investors.

URC's major shareholders—JG Summit Holdings Inc., Express Holdings Inc. and Robinsons Supermarket Corp.—raised some ₱7 billion from the sale of their shares in the branded foods company.

In a filing with the Philippine Stock Exchange, JG Summit said that without the one-time gain, net income would still have grown 17.7 percent to ₱670.6 million from ₱569.2 million.

Consolidated revenues were higher by 45.9 percent at ₱213.54 billion from ₱146.33 billion last year, boosted by the company's core businesses such as foods and real estate developments, as well as revenues from power barons.

Interest income from various investment portfolios also boosted the company's revenues, reflecting a 194.8-percent growth to ₱1.56 billion.

Set off business costs, however, registered a 109 percent increase from the company's telecommunications unit dropped by 6 percent. Revenues from the textile business also decreased by 25 percent.

Gross profit for the first quarter hit ₱51.5 billion, higher by 33 percent. But rising costs of services in the air transportation and mobile phone businesses limited the growth of gross margins. Operating expenses swelled 24.6 percent to ₱41.87 billion from ₱33.66 billion.

Gains related to operating the mobile phone business and air transportation, as well as the expansion of the firm's foods business in Asia, all contributed to the growth in sales.

Financing costs and other charges incurred in the first quarter was up 37.3 percent to ₱2.20 billion this year. The increase is the level of the company's financial debt contributed to higher finance costs.

URC posted consolidated net sales of ₱9.2 billion for the three months ended Dec. 31, 2005, a 21.7 percent decrease over the same period of last year. This was driven by the growth in branded consumer foods.

Robinsons Land Corp. recorded gross revenues of ₱5.72 billion for the first quarter of its fiscal year 2006, up by 36 percent from last year's ₱5.25 billion. Net income for the three months ended Jan. 31 stood at ₱459 million, up by 38 percent from last year's ₱326.5 million.


**Philippine National Bank**

**NOTICE OF ANNUAL STOCKHOLDERS' MEETING**

Notice is hereby given that the Annual Meeting of Stockholders of the Philippine National Bank will be held on May 30, 2006 at 9:00 a.m. at the Ballroom, Upper Lobby, Century Park Hotel, 599 Pedro Gil corner Sr. St., Manila, Manila.

The Agenda for the meeting is as follows:

1. Call to Order
2. Secretary's Proof of Notice and Quorum
3. Approval of the Minutes of the 2005 Annual Stockholders' Meeting held on May 24, 2005
4. Report of the President on the Results of Operations for the Year 2005
5. Approval of the 2005 Annual Report
6. Approval of the Amendment to the Amended By-Laws (transfer of the position, powers and duties of the Chairman of the Board in Sections 6.1 and 6.5, article VI captioned "Officers" to Section 6.4, Article 4 captioned "Board of Directors")
7. Ratification of all Acts, Resolutions and Proceedings of the Board of Directors and Corporate Officers since the 2005 Annual Stockholders' Meeting
8. Election of Directors
9. Appointment of External Auditor
10. Other Matters
11. Adjournment

Minutes of the 2005 Annual Stockholders' Meeting as well as resolutions of the Board of Directors from May 25, 2005 will be available for examination during office hours at the Office of the Corporate Secretary.

Only stockholders of record as of May 2, 2006 will be entitled to notice and vote at this meeting. Registration will begin at 8:00 a.m.

If you cannot personally attend the meeting, you may designate your authorized representative by submitting a PROXY to the Office of the Corporate Secretary not later than 5:00 p.m. on May 26, 2006. Any proxies so received will be validated on May 26, 2006, 9:30 a.m., at the Office of the Stock Transfer Agent at Metrobank Center, 9754 Isaias Avenue, Makati City.

Pasay City, March 24, 2006

ALFREDO C. FERNANDEZ
Corporate Secretary


# Digitel posts ₱42-M profit in 1st quarter

By Dorin L. Lazo

GOKONGWEI-CONTROLLED DIGITEL Telecommunications Phils. Inc. reversed its fortunes in the first quarter of 2006, managing to eke out a profit of ₱42.2 million even as it posted a net loss of ₱451.2 million in the same period last year.

In a disclosure to corporate regulators, Digitel said its bottom line was boosted by an increase in the number of subscribers for the "3&1" service of its first cellular brand.

"Digitel expects to further improve results of operation as it continues to expand the wireless network, introduce new and innovative products, and implement cost-minimizing measures to further reduce its costs and expenses," the company added in its report to the Securities and Exchange Commission.

In the first quarter, Digitel registered a 16.7-percent increase in its consolidated revenues to ₱1.12 billion from ₱1.28 billion a year ago.

Among the business segments, the wireless communications services posted an increase of ₱26.1 million to ₱706.2 million from ₱736 million last year, it said.

Its wireless data communications services posted an increase of ₱4.5 million or 7 percent to ₱72.1 million from ₱67.7 million.

"The increase in these business segments was brought about by the increase in the subscriber base arising from the successful launch of 3&1® unlimited postpaid features and the competitive rates of the wireless data communications services," Digitel said.

The company has slightly more than two million subscribers for its two cellular services, which lags a pure third behind industry giants Philippine Long Distance Telephone Co., with its Smart and Piltel brands, and Globe Telecom Inc.

However, the increases were tempered by lower wireline voice communication service and wireless non-service revenue," the company said.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# Gov't debt stood at P3.96T in end-Feb

By Michelle V. Rosca

THE NATIONAL GOVERNMENT'S debt stood at P3.96 trillion as of end-February, unchanged from the previous month's level, as the additional borrowings undertaken in the second month were simply offset by the declining effects of a stronger peso on foreign liabilities.

The debt figure was an accumulated amount of borrowings that the government undertook over the past years to cover regular cash requirements that could not be accommodated by its revenues. The government also borrows to pay maturing obligations.

Data made by the Bureau of the Treasury showed that of the debt, domestic loans accounted for P2.17 billion, up by a measly 0.5 percent from the previous month's figure. The Treasury said the slight increase was due to the higher volume of government se-

curities issued in February.

Foreign borrowings, on the other hand, stood at P1.8 billion, dropping by 0.6 percent from P1.81 billion a month ago. The Treasury attributed the decline to external debts to the appreciation of the peso from January to February.

The Treasury also said foreign debts declined because the government paid more maturing external obligations than it borrowed during the month.

Domestic borrowings are mostly undertaken through the regular issuance of treasury bills and bonds, foreign borrowings come from either the sale of sovereign bonds in the international market or official development assistance provided by multilateral and bilateral agencies.

The country's biggest source of ODA include the Japan Bank for International Cooperation, the Asian Development Bank and the World Bank.

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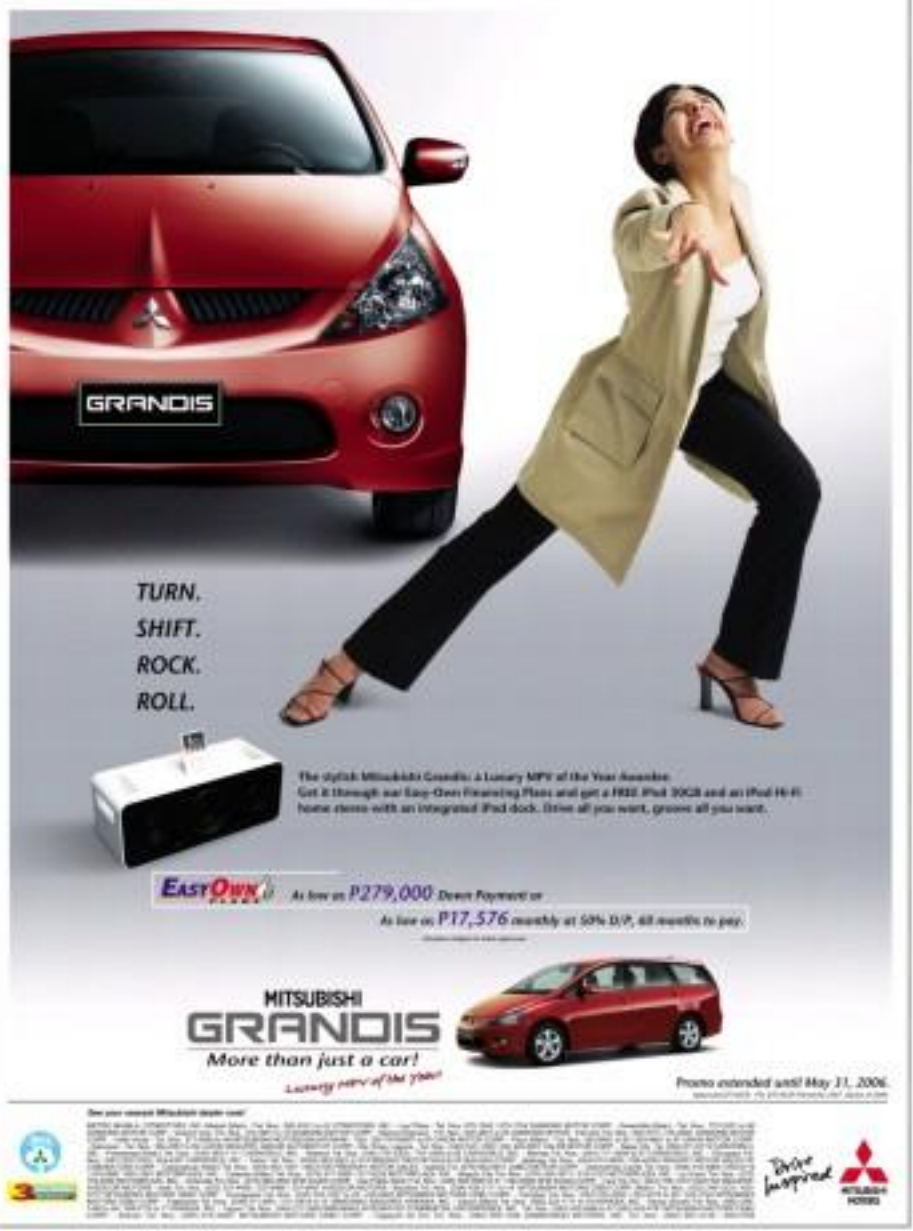

# BCDA to bid out 6-hectare prime lot in Fort Boni

## Terms of sale readied; auction to be set soon

By Elizabeth L. Sanchez

ABANTA

THE BASES CONVERSION DEVELOPMENT Authority (BCDA) is set to auction a 6-hectare lot in front of a police school north of Fort Bonifacio in Taguig City, said BCDA president Mariano Abaya.

In an interview after Monday's press conference held by Fort Bonifacio Development Corp., Abaya said the government had been preparing the terms of the bidding and that it might possible sell the property within this year or next year.

Abaya refused to divulge the value of the property or the expected proceeds from the sale, saying he would only give the details of the sales when the bid terms were completed.

He, however, said sales proceeds would be earmarked for the Modernization program of the Armed Forces of the Philippines and the construction of former military bases such as Clark Air Base, Subic Naval Base , John Hay and Fort Bonifacio into industrial and logistics hubs, as provided by Philippine laws.

BCDA is also preparing for the sale of residential lots in Fort Bonifacio that are currently occupied by retiring and retired officers of the AFP.

This will be pursued despite pending cases that seek to determine the true owners of the lots which, according to an earlier appraisal, could fetch P20,000/per square meter.

Under a previous valuation, the retiring and retired areas could fetch as much P14.4 billion in revenues for the government.

The 6.6-hectare Multi Purpose Institutional Area (MPIA) property that would be sold forms part of the 15 hectares of prime Fort Bonifacio land that the BCDA was planning to privatize this year.

BCDA vice president for corporate planning Aileen Zosa earlier said the property to be privatized this year also included six 8.5-hectare lot in the northern General Business District.

Both lots are located north of J&B Price Mart, near the Fort Bonifacio Gate 3 along JP Rizal avenue, its neighboring lot is a 10.5-hectare property owned by Metro Bank.

In separate tenders last year, major developers and certain embassies had expressed their interest in these prime pieces of property. These included the SM Group, Ayala Land, Fort Bonifacio Development Corp., the Robinsons Group and Megaworld Corp.

Under Republic Act 7227, enacted in 1992, also states that 50.5 percent of the proceeds should be used for "the transfer of the AFP military camps and the construction of new camps, the modernization of the AFP, the conversional and long-term housing loan assistance and livelihood assistance to AFP officers and enlisted men and their families, and the rehabilitation and expansion of the AFP medical facilities."

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**BGC RETAIL PROMENADE**
An artist's perspective of the BGC retail promenade, the focal point of the city center of Fort Bonifacio Global City. It will be a linear park lined by two boulevards of innovative retail concepts.

# Port privatization pushed

By Konrad W. Domingo

PRIVATE SECTOR GROUPS AND PORT users yesterday said they wanted the government to immediately privatize the Manila North Harbor through a public bidding and a multi-operator scheme.

This was according to the Philippine Chamber of Commerce and Industry, the Export Development Council, Distribution Management Association of the Philippines and the Coalition for Ports and Shipping Modernization.

Ronald C. Jao, PCCI president, said the groups involved in early dialogue because of rising concerns over key issues raised recently.

"PCCI has written a letter to the Philippine Ports Authority recommending that the privatization of Terminal 1 be done as soon as possible due to the need (for) transparent and competitive procedures to undertake the process through a public bidding," Jao said.

"PCCI also recommended for POEA to maintain operating Terminal Two, while undertaking a thorough review and feasibility study on the need to modernize or upgrade for the One privatization efforts," he added.

Jao said port users called on PPA to allow the transfer Harbor Centre and the South Harbor to operate in competition with Terminals 1 and 2.

"By competition, we mean allowing the current operators/users of the international shipping terminals and ports (such as those for bulk, break and containerized cargo, and passenger traffic)," he said.

The expansion area funded by the 30.1 percent increase in its base portfolio in 2005 to P2.6 billion even as the BSP reported that the industry had a 4.6 percent year-on-year decline in loans to 1,206 billion.

This balloon that none is the loans to expand credit expansion," Betty Sumulo, iBank executive vice president and head of corporate banking said.

iBank recently said its shareholders have agreed to accept Tokai Bank's tender offer to purchase 97 percent to 300 percent of iBank shares at P42.50 per share.

# iBank income up 132%

INTERNATIONAL EXCHANGE Bank said its first quarter income hit P483.9 million, up 131.3 percent from year ago's P174.5 million.

"We had a robust first quarter in trading profits, net interest income and fees and logistical flexibility growth. We have seen a very steady improvement in income in the last five years as the bank re-positioned its business," Tony Moreno, iBank CFO said.

Total assessments up to P81.3 billion or 19.5 percent higher than March 2006 level of P63.3 billion.

# FPHC net soars by 501%

FIRST PHILIPPINE HOLDINGS Corp. of the Lopez family posted a 501 percent increase in its consolidated net income in the first quarter to P13.7 billion from P2.28 million over the same period last year, a report filed with the Philippine stock exchange showed.

This was mainly due to a P13.7-billion gain from the sensible offering of power producer First Generation Corp.

Last February, First Gen raised P6.3 billion or P362 million from the sale of shares in the stock market. This resulted in the reduction of FPHC's interest in First Gen to 67 percent from 88.4 percent.

FPHC said the sale of the shares of California-based semiconductor and software supplier IBP Technology Holdings Inc. (IBP) last March, which fetched P199 million, also propped up profit figures.

A stronger peso also helped boost year-to-date foreign exchange gain to P552 million.

Revenue from the core businesses, consolidated net income would still be up 26 percent to the first quarter to P698 million.

In the meantime, First Gen posted a net income of $27 million , up 25 percent.

# Finance mag cites SMIC

SMC INVESTMENTS CORP. (SMIC) was of its subsidiaries were ranked as among the Philippines' Top Ten Best Managed Companies in Finance Asia Magazine's (May) 2006 issue.

Interviews polled by Finance Asia ranked SMIC as among the Best Managed Companies in the country, together with small subsidiary SM Prime Holdings Inc. and banking unit Banco de Oro Universal Bank.

(SMIC and BDO also made it in the list of Philippine companies with the best corporate governance. Both firms were also included in the list of companies with the best investor relations.

SMIC is spending as much as P15 billion this year for the SM Group projects including new shopping malls and retail stores, food resort and tourism projects, car sites in the works, including the development of the 5,500-hectare Hamilo Coast in Nasugbu, Batangas into a world-class resort complex.

# Smart seeks . . .

From page B1

ing the company's 3G service, which allows users to make video calls through their handsets, as well as to download and watch video clips, and browse the Internet at broadband speed.

Smart representatives will present to raise for a tax incentives package before BOI officials next week in the hope of obtaining similar incentives that were granted to Globe.

According to Chua, Smart planned to set up as many as 1,000 base stations to make 3G services accessible nationwide, at present, Smart has 4000 base stations ... a number which will rise to 1,200 by year's end according to the company's estimate.

On the other hand, Globe has 1,100 base stations and hopes to raise this number to 1,800 under the expansion plan to make 3G services accessible nationwide. It has committed to put up at least 2,500 3G base stations over the next five years in one of the conditions for its 3G license from the National Telecommunications Commission.

Globe was granted pioneer status formed on the large amount it intends to invest in new technology, according to the BOI. Under this new registration, Globe will be entitled to a new opening of additional areas and other concessions and incentives.

The company was qualified for a six-year tax holiday, duty-free importation of capital goods and other fiscal and non-fiscal incentives.

# BIR April collection rises 13% to P71.3B

## Agency's highest single-month tax take but still P7.7 billion short of target

By Michelle V. Rivera

THE BUREAU OF INTERNAL REVENUE yesterday said its tax collection in April reached P71.3 billion, the highest single-month collection recorded by the agency.

The amount was 13 percent higher than the P63 billion collected in the same month last year but was P7.7 billion short of the BIR's April target of P79 billion, which the government said was necessary to meet its fiscal targets for 2006.

The BIR, moreover, has more than 60 percent of the national government's revenue collection. The assistant secretary officials who feared that the shortfall might jeopardize the government's goal of reducing the budget deficit to P145 billion this year from last year's P146.4 billion.

The government had high hopes of meeting its targets with the implementation of the Reformed Value Added Tax law, which raised the VAT rate from 10 to 12 percent and the corporate income tax rate from 32 to 35 percent.

Albay Rep. Joey Salceda earlier called for a revamp of the BIR and the source of its head, Revenue Commissioner Jose Mario Buting, whom he blamed for the shortfall in collection. Salceda said there was no reason for the BIR to fall short of its target given the increase in the tax rate combined with growth in corporate earnings during the taxable period covered.

But the BIR said the restrictions were unfair considering that the agency's collection year-on-year had been improving. The BIR earlier said the target assigned to it by the national government might be too high.

"Instead of getting a pat on our backs for doing our best, we get accosted, and our commissioner is being rumored to be to [Salceda] to quit," the BIR said.

The BIR earlier said that despite the increase in tax rates, its collection for April was partly affected by the decrease in the withholding tax claimed by corporate taxpayers.

The Philippine government is hard pressed to meet its budget deficit target for the year, as it seeks improvements in its credit standing as assessed by international credit rating agencies. Fiscal authorities are banking on the expected higher revenue collections to secure more favorable rating from credit rating agencies.

The Department of Finance earlier said Moody's Investors Service had expressed willingness to improve its credit outlook on the Philippines from "negative" to "stable" if the government would be able to collect the expected revenues from the tax measures.

In the meantime, a Malacañang order deferring tariff-exempted oil is expected to adversely affect the fiscal runs of Customs's collection performance.

Customs Acting Commissioner Napoleon Morales said Customs will file suit in the oil tariff from the 5 percent to 2 percent, the BOC would lose P1.727 billion in duty collection. If the tariff would be slashed to 1 percent, the revenue loss would amount to P1.045 billion. And if the tariff would be brought down to zero, the BOC would lose P5.182 billion in potential duty collection.

The BOC is tasked to collect P197 billion for 2006, while the BIR is required to bring in P671 billion.

FTA WITH EUROPE NEXT

## Asean, S. Korea OK trade deal

HEAD MEMBERS OF THE ASSOCIATION of Southeast Asian Nations yesterday signed a trade pact with South Korea and agreed with the European Union to work harder toward forging a similar arrangement.

The signing highlighted the Third Asean-Republic of Korea Consultations held in Makati City, which coincided with the 11th ASEM Summit.

Seoul Jong-yong, trade minister of Lian and co-chair of the Asean-Korea meet, said in a briefing that Asean members, except Thailand, signed a Trade in Goods Agreement with South Korea, which paves the way for the Asean-Korea free Trade Area.

Entering and the TIG was signed under the Framework Agreement on Comprehensive Economic Cooperation signed in November in Cambodia last April.

"What makes this more significant is that this is the first such agreement that the Asean signed with a member of the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development," Kim Hyun Chung, South Korea's trade minister, said.

The OECD groups affluent countries that help governments **multilaterals** to prepare these nations face the challenges of a globalized economy.

Asean Secretary General Ong Keng Yong said Thailand was unable to sign the agreement yesterday but would do so as soon as it was able to settle "some domestic procedures."

Also, Ong said progress was made on a possible similar pact with the European Union following the 7th Asean-EU Consultations.

In a statement, the Asean and the EU said there was "still scope and much potential" for both regions to pursue a more ambitious goal for closer economic integration."

Coming out of the meeting itself, EU Trade Commissioner Peter Benjamin Mandelson said the ministers underscored the Sutherland report, which called on the two regions to take their economic partnership to "a higher level."

This refers to the establishment of a World Trade Organization-consistent Free Trade Area and expansion of economic cooperation.


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## Coco oil exports up 27%

By Christine A. Gaylican

PHILIPPINE COCONUT OIL EXports rose 27 percent in the first quarter of the year to 445,564 metric tons from last year's 354,532 metric tons, the Philippine Coconut Authority yesterday said.

The increased export volume translated to "greater improvement in earnings to $130 million in the first three months of the year from year-ago's $179 million, PCA Deputy Administrator for marketing Arturo Luporti Jr. said in a briefing.

A supply glut in the world market during the period pulled down the international price of coconut by 34 percent to $514.57 per metric ton from $903 per metric ton in the same period last year, Luporti said.

He said prices might improve this second semester as demand was expected to increase.

Traders said the market was tending to go softer early in the week due to its reported high level of shipments this month and is set to establish the new complex in Mercur the Chicago Board of Trade.

Softer indications in the coconut oil market led some buyers to test the market by instructing smaller quantities," one trader said.

Traders quoted coconut oil for May/June shipment at $549 a metric ton, CIF Rotterdam, while June/July was quoted at $580/ton. These prices were lower by $15/ton from prices offered a week ago.

## Japan firm . . .

From page 6

continued to Asean members.

The Japanese company, based in Chiba, Japan, wants to construct two coconut planting and assessor oil production to bring down the cost of coconut methyl esther, which now costs P128 a liter or more expensive than petroleum-based fuels.

"Sipo Engineering would want varying down the cost and is willing to embark into Cargo-coated processes," explained DOE Deputy Administrator Carlos Caipio.

Caipio said the agency would assist the company in looking for arable lands in Davao, Pampanga and as far as Cagayan Valley to fill up its required area of 600,000 hectares.

"This project is for the moderate term as it takes three years for a coconut seedling to actually produce coconut oil," he said.

According to Sipo Engineering's corporate profile posted on its website (www.sipo-eng.co.jp), the company's operations cover hydrocarbon fields such as geology of chemicals, petrochemicals, oil refining, natural gas, and oil and gas development, geo-hydrothermal fields such as nuclear energy and power generation, industrial plant fields such as plut materials, iron and steel, and food and beverage, and urban infrastructure fields such as management and business consultation based on information technology (IT) and environment and construction.

For more than 50 years since its founding in 1961, Sipo Engineering has handled more than 1,800 projects globally mainly in the plant engineering field. The company earned a consolidated net income of 1.3 billion yen in fiscal year 2005.

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# Gov't to borrow ₱104.5B in Q3

## BTr to issue Treasury bills, bonds

By Michelle V. Ramos

THE BUREAU OF THE TREASURY said the government would borrow P104.5 billion from the domestic market in the third quarter this year, 21.2 percent less than the P133.6 billion borrowed during the same period last year.

The government borrows local by largely through the regular auctions of Treasury bills and bonds.

National Treasurer Omar Cruz said reporters in a press briefing yesterday that the government need not borrow as much money from the domestic market this year due to the narrowing budget gap.

The budget deficit stood at P146.6 billion last year and is estimated to be cut to P125 billion this year.

"It is only natural that the borrowing requirement of the government will be less, being consistent with the improving fiscal deficit," Cruz told reporters.

The BTr said in a report that of the P104.5 billion scheduled borrowing for the third quarter, P46 billion will come from the issuance of Treasury bills, or government securities with tenors of one year and less.

The government would also auction off P58.5 billion worth of Treasury bonds, or government securities with medium- to long-term maturities.

T-bonds to be offered in the third quarter is lower than the P77.9 billion offered in the same period last year.

The BTr said the T-bonds to be auctioned off in the third quarter would feature 10 years, 15, 20, and 25 years.

The BTr attributed the expected improvement in its budget deficit figure to the estimated increase in revenue collection, partly due to the increase in the value-added tax rate and the corporate income tax rate.

The adjusted VAT law raised the VAT rate from 10 to 12 percent starting February and lowered the corporate income tax rate from 35 to 30 percent.

The actual impact of the higher tax rate for VAT and corporate income tax, however, remains to be seen as the Bureau of Internal Revenue, the government's main revenue collection agency, has yet to release the expected proceeds of the tax measures.

The BIR was reported to have posted a revenue collection shortfall of almost P7 billion in April, although the revenue agency announced that its collection performance was much better than what it recorded during the same month of last year.

The BIR was tasked to collect P79 billion in April alone, and P675 billion for the entire year.

# Peso continues fall, down to 52.37 vs $

By Doris C. Dumlao

THE PESO DEPRECIATED FURTHER to a fresh four-month low of 52.37 against the US dollar on rising corporate demand ahead of the dollar payout as well as renewed speculative bottom domestic interest rates, currency dealers said.

After shedding 66 centavos on Monday, the local currency lost another 22 centavos at the Philippine Dealing System to worsen the previous day's 52.15 to the US dollar.

It was the currency's weakest finish since closing at 52.395/41 on Jan. 27 this year.

The peso opened at the intra-day high of 52.25 and closed near the intra-day low of 52.42 to the US dollar, while volume turnover amounted to $675.5 million.

"This is the technical correction that we've been waiting for since we came from the 56.81 level in September-October last year. Since then, the market has been moving only one way, up. Entering the penal and is due for a technical rebound," said Jose Emmanuel Hilado, treasurer of SSN Private Bank and president of foreign exchange association SCEPHilippines.

Hilado said this was nothing to worry about since the peso has gained a hefty 6 cent the last few months and a technical bounce is evening the US dollar was healthy.

He expressed the market to see less the 52.00-53.81 levels before the currency resumes its bullish trend.

"Nothing has changed as far as the country's credit fundamentals are concerned," Hilado said. "Of course, the other thing is that interest rates based on Treasury bill rates are too low."

He agreed that post-dominated government securities were losing their appeal to offshore investors because the difference in the yield compared to issues abroad was narrowing.

"We have a situation where there's a possibility of a fresh increase in rate hike in the US and Philippine rates are at the level not good for the local currency," Hilado said.

Hilado said the average yield of 91-day Treasury bills of about 5 percent, for instance, widened further by 10 basis points over the previous week, the dollar since bank offered rate of 5 percent and the three-month LIBOR (London Interbank Offered Rate) of 5.17 percent.

# Electric cooperatives readied for spot mart

By Abigail L. Ho

IN PREPARATION FOR THE START OF COMmercial operations of the wholesale electricity spot market in June, market operator Philippine Electricity Market Corp. (PEMC) is conducting capacity-building sessions with 71 electric cooperatives (Lecos) and Genco.

PEMC participant development officer Carmi Manuel said these sessions would prepare the re-capacitates to become participants of PEMC.

"The training sessions are designed to provide professional skills, develop and instill willingness rather than compulsion in participants, and improve and accelerate market understanding and preparedness," she said in a statement yesterday.

For his part, PEMC president Leon Hedegaard said Ecos are the electric cooperatives as integral parts of the electricity because as "they are not only the main wholesale of power to consumers in the countryside, but are also among the primary instruments of change in rural economies."

Under the Ecos, consumers such as the electric cooperatives, distribution utilities such as the Manila Electric Co., and other large-scale power buyers will all have equal opportunities to purchase power at the best possible price via the electricity bourse.

Electricity will be traded via the bourse on an hourly basis. Much like trading in the stock market, electricity prices are not fixed. These will fluctuate depending on the supply, demand and even the time of trading.

# MOTORING

E-mail us at motoring@inquirer.com.ph

Editor Cesar G. Mangosing

# Adventure ride with Toyota Innova

By Charles E. Bahar

LAST YEAR, TOYOTA MOTOR Philippines started what is dubbed the Innova Road Trek, an adventure packed ride wherein teams representing various motoring media outfits go to several destinations of a particular region (last year was Panay Island) and try to earn points from the various activities prepared in each of these stopovers.

Ms Ariel de Jesus, TMP supervisor for PR and sales promotion, reminded, this event is not a road race. Instead, the Road Trek's fun challenges are designed to test the wits and physical prowess of each team while at the same time allow each member to experience the performance of the Toyota Innova through various road conditions.

This year's edition of Road Trek is especially significant not only because the event brought the participants to two of Mindanao's most prosperous and developed cities—Cagayan de Oro and Davao—but also this is the first time the Innova participated (after failing to field a team last year).

Like last year, the Road Trek's itinerary and challenges remained a surprise. However, the 18 participating teams (Team Innova is made up of columnist Andrei Dalisay, digital purposes specialist Genie Laguana, IT and fan Israel Nick Duterte and this writer) got an idea of what the first challenge would be. Upon arrival at the Cagayan de Oro airport, we headed straight to our assigned Innova where huge inflatable rafts were strapped on top.

## Conquer a raging river

Indeed, the first day of the Road Trek not only made us conquer a raging river but also found our team (among the challenges included) were jumping off a three-storey high rock rising in the middle of the river and at time it's at a breezy the team starts paddle against the current, afterward jump off the raft, flip it, then turn it over again and then hop back into it).

After this grueling task where we paddled all day (covering over 12 km and encountering 14 rapids!) under the sun's scorching heat, we headed to another destination, which we thought is our break.

Having guess. Next stop was Magsaysay Nature Park where each team must send a representative who must ride only four (like a cable car), slide courtesy of a rope-and-pulley arrangement and hold a plastic of water that must be thrown at a target several meters down. Afterward, another team member must rappel 12 meters down biting a spoon filled with five rainbow nuts (if you drop one, this will be subtracted to your team's overall score).

It was already dusk when we arrived at the Kamelia Hotel. After freshening up, we headed to Tahing Dahing Dagat restaurant for our much-deserved dinner.

The sharp was short welcome since we needed it the following day as the teams

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CHEVROLET

# Taking the Ranger north

**MY DRIFT**

*Andre Palma*

TOYOTA'S RANGER PICKUP HAD a very long day ahead of it. As it sat there, in one of the front parking slots of the Intramuros Godzilla statue, little did it know that other than it would have to put in, more fun anything of its final destination for the day. The road ahead had the dangers of the Banaue mountain ranges in Nueva Vizcaya, and the final stop, nearly 200 kilometers away from where the truck was standing.

It struck me of just how casually natural the risks of the genes, stripped degrees of one of the vanities of the model would be from the busy congestion building before my eyes of the multilateral lane of Dalton. The roads ahead would mainly be before two more provincial highways, but there were quite a few notable sections marked in our road book. We would have to put our way—day fighting with tricycles, banca trucks, buses and trucks...in the to play in some of the best driving roads in northern Luzon.

## Speed traps

The first task at hand would be familiarize the inner heights of the Ranger's cabin. Impressive, in a base version with tuner finish. It may sound ludicrous but there was a common worry of the tall roads populist speed traps. Yes, ladies and gentlemen, even if the current Ranger rides about a generation back in technology from the automan tall, there's speedometer. 100kph engines were proliferating among the mountain roads, and I'd rather the standard speed limit up the SLEX with confidence. Conviction is another matter altogether.

Interlocutor is relatively downwinded, but helped along by two important factors: the good notion of the 2nd and 3rd gears, the length of the 4th ring, plus the useful torque of the engine. The 2.5-liter, 12-valve single-cam turbo diesel is decent, but didn't 120 bhp, while pull is hefty at 280 Nm of noise. The SLT unit's 5-speed manual is also a saving grace for the interior platform or the automatic transmission of the four-compression unit/merely commendable for the sake of comfort and ease of use.

## Ride comfort

The ride comfort of a pickup is never something that one looks forward to or long, driven our drives and the Ranger is not an exception. The planted 11-liter driver, plus cargo would surely knock a little wind from driver and passengers. So, rested as our cars absorbed the destruction, one can get quickly distract when you start to wonder why you left your bakery bath at home. The driver would be no walk in the park; it would be work and hard labor, at that.

Work began, in earnest, as our vehicle began to ascend Dalton Pass, on the border between Nueva Ecija and Nueva Vizcaya. The turkey was a decent highway, with its notorious truck and bus traffic would be a test of the truck's basic balance and vehicular fundamentals. The key to any good driving experience is patience and flow, but it would not be emboldened to say that momentum is the Ranger's friend...actually its best friend in the conditions of Dalton Pass.

## True highlight of the drive

Also, on hands as the genre of vehicle goes, it seems fortunate that this Ford is actually also a rather forgiving platform when one makes mistakes. The conventional transmission has necessary dab on the brake pedal, for mid-turn correction, a not something that will elicit too much tension. Just don't try to round on the middle pedal while turned, as the Ranger is not that sympathetic. The descent down Dalton seemed to confirm the capabilities of such a long drive, but the limited thinness applied and shredded into was the true highlight of the drive.

The key to the tackling the tight, twisty sections headed for the rise terrain is the Ranger SLT's limited slip Differential. Turn the truck hard into the curve and get repeatedly sideways from a dangerous recipe of speed, gravel, careless and elevation change. While more essential and suited for rough, foul terrain, the system is also a boon to mountain-side maneuvers. Instead of the wheels with constant, tantalizing unfettered traction between the wheels with constant, tantalizing unfettered traction between the wheels with constant, tantalizing unfettered traction between

# The Murano identity

By A. CHRISTINE CHICAGO CHEERS last Saturday night, the man who saved Nissan Motor Co. from the brink of bankruptcy was thrown unsuspecting out of a black Nissan Murano. I found the scene incredulo... for it was during Ghosn's awesome turnaround of Nissan in Japan several years ago that the Murano was created.

Now the president/CEO of both Nissan and Renault (which has a major stake in Nissan), Ghosn spends half the month in Tokyo, half in Paris. In a way, his work schedule reflects the half-Asian, half-European identity of the Murano. Named after an island suburb of Venice that is renowned for its beautiful glass works, the Murano memorably blends the flair of Italian design with the sound power of one of Japan's foremost sports cars, the Nissan 350Z.

**ON THE ROAD**

*Anne Sevilla-Mendoza*

## Ultimate

Aside from this European identity the Murano can also be described as the most stylish, ultimate luxury crossover, combining the smooth ride, power and responsive handling of a sports sedan. It is built on the same platform as the M, mixed with the flexible cargo capacity of a wagon and the high driving position and roominess of a medium-size sport utility vehicle.

Although the Murano by its very name is identified with high-quality glass, it is not so fragile. Thus, like all crossovers in four-wheel independent suspension was designed more for highway travel than rugged off-road terrain, but its 4x4 nature and Xtronic Continuously Variable Transmission (CVT), in addition to its size and weight, and will not ride comfort.

CVT, instead of shifting through gears like a conventional automatic transmission (AT), operates with pulleys. It changes ratios continually, more quickly and more smoothly than a normal AT, always matching engine speed to map in the driver's hand. The result is smoother acceleration and should improve fuel economy.

## Mileage

Overall mileage is supposed to average 8 km/liter in combined city and highway driving, but 4-km/liter is more like it. I started out with a full tank (82 liters) and after driving 207.5 km, the tank was one-fourth (20.5 liters) full. But then, the speeds at which I drove the Murano [100 kph at one point] must have affected its performance.

Despite its 2020-kg test curb weight, the Murano is surprisingly nimble. Mated to a six-gear CVT, is powerful, ultra-quiet 3.5 liter V6 twin cam engine, tuned to produce 195 hp/6,000 rpm, delivers acceleration and handling as swiftly, as smoothly and as responsively as a sports sedan. The 3.0 liter/5,600 rpm max output benefits discrete responses, so a green road speed, you can shift from D (drive) to 6 (low) to raise engine revs 2,500 rpm.

## Legroom

There is plenty of legroom for three tall adults occupying the back seat. By pulling a strap, you can recline the backrest so that two rear passengers can lean back, stretch their legs and enjoy the ride. The rear seats also split 60/40 to accommodate lengthy cargo. When you pull a handy lever in the cargo area, the rear seats flop forward to increase cargo space to 63.4 cubic feet from 32.6 cubic feet.

All seats are luxurious black leather contrasting dramatically with the brushed aluminum panel and pastels in the roomy cabin. Easy touches: the steering wheel-mounted audio controls, the powered glass moonroof and 225-watt four-audio system with seven speakers, subwoofer and 6-disc in-dash CD player. The driver's seat is power adjustable with memory the rearview mirror is auto dimming, mirror controls are dual zone with voice in the B pillars, the pockets are power ad justable, door pockets flip out for easy access and the rear-stowed glove box is big enough for a laptop computer. A dashboard monitor displays info such as average speed, time and traveled distance and there are three power outlets and cupholders.

Summing up, the Murano is a jewel of an SUV yet reasonably priced at P2,000 million.

THE ITALIAN-STYLED Murano stands out.

*E-mail comments to autolist@yahoo.com.ph.*


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# Motorsports Awards caps first AAP auto show

SOME OF THE MOST PROMinent names in Philippine motorsports are this year's winners of the Automobile Association of the Philippines' (AAP) annual Motorsports Awards which capped the recently concluded 1st AAP Auto Show at The Forum, PEC Complex over the weekend.

The awards were a fitting climax to a week long celebration of the AAP's 75th anniversary that saw the pillars of Philippine motorsports, both past and present, come together to celebrate and look back on the colorful history of auto sports in the country.

## Awardees

The recipients of the AAP Motorsports Awards during last Sunday's closing ceremonies of the 1st AAP Auto Showcase Leo Joel Cordero (drag racing), Santo Gaspay (4x4), Michelle Sumgar (car floating), Alex Reyes (rally circuit), Daryll Flores (slalom) and Judy Guerrero (touring).

Likewise awarded were the winners of the various motorsports competitions held during the three-day AAP Auto Show, to wit:novices, the category winners were Mike Garay, best novice; Arthur Perez, fastest race wheel driver; Pam Sarda, fastest front wheel driver; Xamie Ocuba from Japan, fastest car drift circle; and Noel Rivera, fastest overall driver of the day.

In the 4x4 category, 4-cylinder class, first place was won by Leo Santos. In second place was Mam La while Bernie Feliciano capped third place. In the 6-cylinder class, the winners were Edie Manrique (1st), Hernan Rhodin Jr (2nd) and Jessy Jamilla (3rd).

AAP officials flagging off participants in the vintage car parade.

In the production category for diesel, first place went to Drew Angeles, followed by Rudy Corsang (2nd) and Mr. Mansoon (3rd), while in the production gas, first place went to Rene Bangkok, followed by Joe Sorem (2nd) and Bel Mendoza (3rd).

## Sponsors

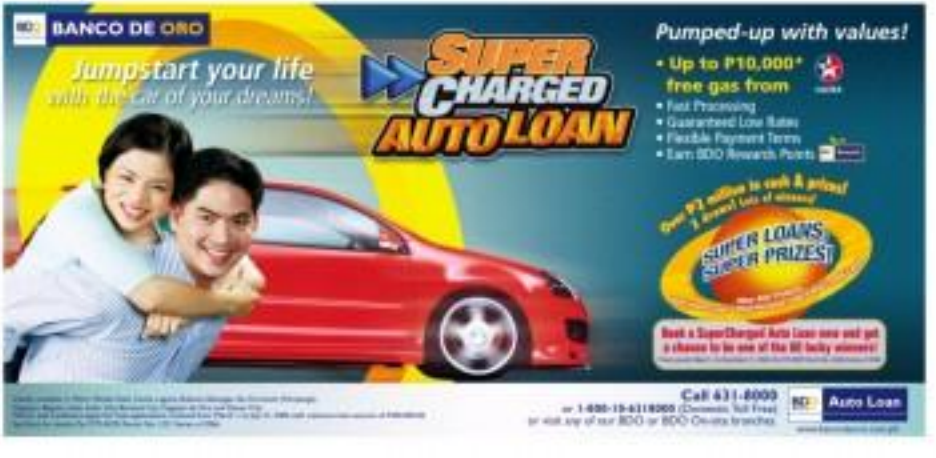
The 1st AAP Auto Show was sponsored by Petron Corp., Sweden, Isuzu Motors Philippines, Lufthansa German Airlines, PS Bank, Sumagen Premium Lipstart, Top Gear, RG 107, 105.1 Citynews and Jam 88.3.

The auto show was also supported by Diamond.com, Isuzu Group of Isuzu dealerships, Pond Lube, Hyundai Asia Resources, Honda Car Makati (Pasig branch), Mitsubishi Motors Philippines Corp., Philippine Rebel Enterprises (Bridgestone), and Mazda Philippines.

## Other highlights

Another highlight of the AAP diamond jubilee celebrations was the AAP Photo Gallery which included famous race/rally driven Dodge Lancer, Dodo Ayuyao, Sister Luna, Joey Warwick, Robert Arrieta, Ayee Ayee, MP Isola, Mandy Edupuy, Boy Delton, Porag Rodriguez/Nichole Ramirez.

The Mirage Cars and Clubs Rally was also a successful event of the AAP jubilee, about 85 cars participated in the Mirage Mazda memorable which was held in cooperation with the Department of Tourism.



WEDNESDAY, MAY 17, 2006 PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER C1

Editor Chole Bunal-Formoso
Chief of Correspondents Plate Pastor

LIFESTYLE

# Summer jobs

## Part 2

The 25b! Correspondents have done crazy things in the line of duty—become a gasoline boy, a supermarket bagger, an elevator operator, pose nude for artists, pretend to become a model, an actress, even a rockstar. The craziness continues this week as more correspondents try their hands at different summer jobs. What's it like to be a clown, a hotel kitchen aide and a movie ticket seller? Find out in this issue. We also have a story from The Philippine Plaza's Chocolate Girl who managed to turn her internship into a really sweet job. Read on

Even without clowning around, I attracted the kids who gave me high fives

CHUBBY and "Chief" with young park goers.

# Clown for a day

Text by Vanessa Avellana Dacuor
25b! Correspondent
Photos by Nino Carandang

THAT ONE SATURDAY WAS MOST unusual, I dare say.

Normally, I wake up to shoulder-of-Oh, no, I have to go to work again. Where's the morning bean?" But that particular day, I became Enchanted Kingdom's resident female clown, Chief.

And though my heart was racing with excitement and anticipation, it was nowhere near funny to find, just the thought of having to face hundreds of children and adults and making sure they like me filled me with dread.

Will I be an effective clown? What makes a good clown anyway?

JR head clown Chubby, who refused to have his real name printed, said there really was nothing to it. If you love what you do, everything should fall into place, he said.

But, including the jokes and intermezzo.

I have always considered myself funny, but most of my jokes are in no way case wholesome. Actually, most of the things I say that people laugh at are sarcastic and crude. They are not "clown jokes."

I started to imagine making a kid cry or shooting blank stares. While some people are terrified at the sight of clowns, there I was fearing becoming one.

"Relax, they won't know who you are," I kept telling myself during the briefing.

Chubby was very accommodating, making sure I did not throw up in my mouth every time he told stories about how some nasty children throw punches, pull your hair and chew ear-away laughing.

I thought to myself, if these mean kids do not know who I am behind the makeup anyway, I could safely get away with throwing a couple of hits myself.

Wrong, of course.

Chubby told me that to be a clown is to surpass everyone in the practice of patience.

Anyway, if ever somebody harasses you while you're in character, you could always remember what they look like and then tell security after so those hooligans will get reminded of their folly, he explained.

Also, there is no eye-for-an-eye, tooth-for-a-tooth rule in clowning!

### Nice job

Luckily, during the hour and a half I walked around with Chubby, nobody dared do anything naughty.

But, oh, were the cameras flashing at all angles!

Being a clown also means getting used to marching and strolling, because everywhere you turn there will always be someone or some group wanting to take pictures with you.

I went on a hunting as you can just imagine the crowd we drew. The more people came in or to snap away, the lighter I felt about being a clown.

Sure, there were kids who immediately pulled back out of fear, but they were trumped by the bunch that couldn't wait just to shake hands and give high fives.

I did not even have to crack a single back-breaking joke! Apparently, being dressed as a clown was funny and fun enough. After all, most of the park guests don't really talk much beyond "Pwedeng magpa-picture?" and "Hi, clown! What's your name?"

I guess to them, clowns weren't really human, but merely characters. It's actually both delightful and sad.

Before I started leaving the crowd, Chubby gave me a challenge. That was to make friends with at least 20 people.

Surprisingly, I met more than 60. And that was just in one hour and 30 minutes!

Behind the anonymity, I felt fulfilled. Although nobody knew who I was, almost everyone I met liked me without me having to say much.

I may not remember all the faces of the people I met, but I am pretty sure they will remember Chief the female clown when they look back.

I am now a resident of over a hundred photographs evidencing people's happy memories that day. And though most of them will probably never know that my real name is Vanessa, that's definitely all right with me.

Special thanks to the Enchanted Kingdom Entertainment head Ilze Gonzales and JR publicist and Ruby Center head Ruby Reserva.

E-mail the author at text_dacuor@yahoo.com

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# Hardwork Hotel

Text by Bianca Consorji
JBCI Correspondent
Photos by Charles Custodio

A FEW YEARS AGO, I THOUGHT I WANT ed to work in a hotel. When I first started one in college with plans of finishing Hotel, Restaurant and Institution Management (HRIM), I dreamed of doing my practicum with the coolest F+vogt hotels. But after a year of dealing with khaki and other similarly abominable subjects, and because I wanted to write instead, I changed my mind and shifted to journalism. (Sometimes it's easy of course.)

However, the F+vogt factor was still there. I still wanted to work in a hotel, wanted to walk into a posh lobby with solemn hostile and nightmarish makeup. I wanted to supervise housekeeping as they moan about their chores. I wanted to greet guests as they come into the hotel. And best of all, I wanted to sample the finest cuisines in the city. This shouldn't just have much I knew about practicum training: nothing.

So when I found I was going to work at a restaurant for one day at the Pan Philippine Plaza, because of suggestions and abundant cake and free grub, started dreaming in my head. Hyacinth Hidalgo, the PR and Communications officer of the Hotel Philippine Plaza—formerly the Westin—told me I was going to work there on the day they were preparing for the Australia-New Zealand Interchange (ANZAI) ball, so I had to overlooped in some serious labor.

"Wear flat, slacks and put your hair in a bun," she said. "And bring evening clothes as well so you can fly the coastals into the where the guests are."

Since I wanted to look polished throughout the whole day I chose black leather boots (heels (the classic thing I had to face aside from flip-flops, which weren't allowed) as my choice of footwear over grubby sneakers. I immediately regretted my choice in the moments I stepped into the kitchen... the floor was slick with oil and sauce, and I had to hold on to everything solid in my vicinity (cooks, school, the good-looking chef at the dessert station) I use to get my bearings.

Everyone else was wearing rubber clogs, and it took all of my self-control to avoid bending up and hitting a fellow trainee in order to get her clogs.

I was also given a chef's uniform reminiscent with "Dede" in red woven on the jacket. Only, when the other chefs told me Jacket the cook-ee's was apparently a big man who was probably a fan caller and 20 pounds heavier than me. This presented some problems with the sleeves, but after rolling up the sleeves and cuffing in every conceivable area, I am screeds.

PUTTING the cushion in the oven

## First course

My first task was to rub spoonfuls of meat into egg wrappers. The meat-filled eggrolls (or lumpia in another venue) were also first course for that night's staff's event, an intimate thirty-half hour-of to diplomats from Australia and New Zealand. The theme of the ball was "Chicago," based on the movie musical of the same title, and the organizers wanted the food to adhere to that theme.

The truth was finally got a piece of egg wrapper, put a dollop of meat, add a dab of egg, roll it up and stack it on the pan. We had to make sure the rolls were all the same size, and that they were sealed neatly. Otherwise, the filling would leak while the rolls were frying. Yuck.

Unfortunately for me, it was mostly machines where I started stuffing the meat into the wrappers, and the watery smells of the kitchen weren't helping my stomach any—a problem I didn't anticipate. I had thought that working in chefs could just help themselves to anything they liked from the kitchen, but it didn't seem so. Everyone was focused on their work, and no one else seemed to be hungry. I died so mix some around tasting my dishes, but they didn't take any more than they had to.

After lunch, I went back for a different set of tasks—I had to assemble salads. Ala cheese platters, and help the other chefs and waiters arrange the platters for the night's menus. Bits of this included cleaning fresh okra and removing the seeds, cheese slice peppers on their chins were going to be used as plates for the meat rolls, and arranging and wiping glass globe bowls.

After an hour or so of helping me with the physical accomplishment, the chefs put me through the ashes around the kitchen, and kitchen, butchering area and the chocolate room. I couldn't leave going inside the giant freezers, although the whole time I was in there, I couldn't help but think of a classic episode of "I Love Lucy" where she mistakenly Lucy Ricardo got stuck inside a freezer for hours. I asked if anyone had actually got locked in, and was answered with an animated "yes." I got out of the freezer immediately.

Pastry kitchens always were much lower than the others...I begged so may in the chocolate room until my shift was over, but unfortunately, the chef in charge was a little too effective for my taste and frustrated the wrath of some. I however, did get to see and Charles, the photographer, pocket a few pralines after I finished working on a batch of chocolate truffles (I offered in order to wash some more other my stash.)

CHANNELING "Popeye" with the hardworking team

## Second weekend

I chose Sunday for the family reward and extended my shift from 7-8 p.m. (both hours during Sundays) to 3-5 p.m. Three desserts were showing "Mission Impossible" hit #7 and the last one was showing "Japanese tea." First task of my day: grilling tofuku. Then I moved on to cleaning I for the tuna sushi pieces.

The pastry is the pressure as the remainder of the cuisines. The job is to grace the cuisine's (courtesy spinoff), creative, clean and true the smaller portions of the dishes, create the dishes using the numbers of the desired either and get it down on the person's request card. It is also the pastry's duty to check the bags of customers and make sure balloons, ice cream ice cones, cameras and pens are not allowed inside the theaters. And it's also their duty to make

## Blood and gore

I started in the [illegible] minutes as well, as much of a daughter as his face didn't want blood and gore. I the butchering are for.

The last area I [illegible] meats, already I can [illegible] anger, and support [illegible] that, I insisted in [illegible] for the task, [illegible] our "familiar with [illegible] there matters for [illegible]

It was probably enough knowledge with the final prep [illegible] the name of the [illegible] ing, he's my luck, [illegible] the soup on a [illegible]

When the engine [illegible] my ear, glad to be [illegible] drug. My day [illegible] inside [illegible] inside [illegible] meals's and a [illegible] seventies, and I did [illegible] things practicum [illegible] touch as cleaning [illegible] completed.

True, hotels are [illegible] their business, they [illegible] drink of the land [illegible] your life more [illegible] stand today it's classy [illegible]

*E-mail the [illegible] bianca.com*

# I worked at th

Text by Tammy David
JBCI Correspondent
Photo by Carli Bartes

I ONLY WATCHED A MOVIE ONCE IN Sigmwood so I was very excited to work in one of "the country's hot spots-of-the-art movie theaters," known for their evolving movie menu.

Serria Tres of Sigmwood Cinemas suggested I come in after their "Week to have the full experience and with the UE cafe now foodcourts now in the lineup. I showed up at the cinema offices for a 5-10 p.m. shift on a Saturday. I was met by Ting Valladares, the cinema manager, who gave me a brief background on the cinema, while Claire Sierra gave me a crash-course on the different ends of the theater personnel. She gave me papers to review which included the orientation manuals, policies and procedures for cinema posters and souvenir spots of Sigmwood Cinemas.

It was the weekend when "Silent Hill" (horror), "The Sentinel" (suspense), "The Wild" (animation) and "What's a Woman Gift" (thriller) were being shown, so imagine the mix of moviegoers coming in.

Selling tickets was easy: Greet the customer, click on the theater/film and desired seat, confirm transaction, print ticket hand the tickets plus change. But since there were a lot of customers that day and I did not want to handle money at first, I opted to stay at the counter of the Sigmwood Cinema Club VIP lane.

I was able to make transactions with a few confidences but mostly I politely directed non-confidences to the other counters. I also answered questions such as "What time is the next showing" and "Why is there a long queue for 'The Silent One'?"

Before I knew it, my shift was over. After recording my policies, I gave myself a pep rating for my first solo stint. I was not in the proper dress code and discovered, much to my chagrin, that I had forgotten my nail-care items familiar items while on the job. I asked the managers if I could come back the following Sunday for a longer shift and to try out other jobs in the cinema, and they agreed.

## Second weekend

I chose Sunday for the family reward and extended my shift from 7-8 p.m. (both hours during Sundays) to 3-5 p.m. Three desserts were showing "Mission Impossible" hit #7 and the last one was showing "Japanese tea." First task of my day: grilling tofuku. Then I moved on to cleaning I for the tuna sushi pieces.

The pastry is the pressure as the remainder of the cuisines. The job is to grace the cuisine's (courtesy spinoff), creative, clean and true the smaller portions of the dishes, create the dishes using the numbers of the desired either and get it down on the person's request card. It is also the pastry's duty to check the bags of customers and make sure balloons, ice cream ice cones, cameras and pens are not allowed inside the theaters. And it's also their duty to make

SELLING the classics...or comedy, or action

to implement the MTRCB ratings—meaning no kids in R-rated films, for instance.

The challenging thing about this job was not only fighting boredom during the dead hours but losing on your face for so long since there were no seats at the person's area. Counting the tickets was also tedious, taking up usually an hour.

After lunch, my next task was to select customers to their seats. Armed with a flashlight, I thought this was the best since all I had to do was hang down as there were and watch some trailers on the side. But, turned out Sigmwood Cinemas had more to it than only seating, so I constantly had to go up and down the stairs. I despise the Dash-Master at the gym, so this was no punishment for always running the other whole time trainee was not looking.

After a couple of customers, I was out of breath and running inside the dimly theater. "Turn off to you, Tammy," I thought and was chugging some juice outside the cinema. I decided to go back to my balanced self once I got my breath and try to make transactions.

## Bad decision

Near the end of the day, I was able to make transactions without fear or disor-

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# Chocolate girl

By April Martinez
2B/T Contributor

AFTER GRADUATING FROM MY course at the Center for Culinary Arts Manila, I immediately started my apprenticeship in Westin Philippine Plaza.

Being an apprentice proved to be a humbling experience for me. I was assigned to mise production, baking batches of cookies and pastries. It was a whole new world for me: meeting and dealing with all sorts of personalities, measuring recipes and learning the value of working quickly on different

At present, I am a casual assigned to the chocolate room. Chef Lito has taught me everything about chocolates and I'm really trained a lot; standing chocolate isn't that simple. One has to melt the chocolates in the right temperature or else it won't come out as expected. Therefore, you really need to hold on to patients. Patience is especially useful when making garnishes for the desserts, because the decorations need are very delicate.

I also learned that finishing the job quickly won't guarantee the quality of the products. Rushing usually breaks the diners' raw desserts, spoiling reputation all over again. From job to life, that's a good lesson to learn.

## Loyola Artists Guild concert

THE LOYOLA ARTISTS GUILD PRESENTS May Day Eve, a musical event for the benefit of the Fine arts Festival 2007, on May 20, 8 p.m., at Faculty Center, 140 Student Ignatius St., Barrio Obrero, QC.

The event is spearheaded by the Creative Writing, Theater Arts, Information Design, and Arts Management students of Ateneo de Manila. Featured Artists include Cynthia Alexander, Gamboa, Orchestra Special, Wheatus, Sugbo, Thggis Silver, and Empty Lines Boulevard.

Tickets are at P150, available at Faculty Center. Call 4017-3614188, 9915-8698920 or 9911-5333286.

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some comedy interjections on the floor when they couldn't devote attention to sit up front or sit at the back (I have suggestions!) better to sit at the back since the screen screens might make them puke).

After two days of working, I was rewarded with a trip inside the projection room. That proved to be the highlight of my experience.

With my experience in Starwood cinemas, Jen says she'll learn about the job, but also some things about myself. As a student of management, I advise her to do her best that "the customer is king," but I told Jen we customers should also know basic courtesy and learn to practice patience.

So next time you plan to munch a movie, always say "thank you," blame yourself if you don't get a good seat and be a little tidy with your movie snacks.

Starwood Cinemas is located at G/L, Starwood City Walk 2. For inquiries, text CTC MOV AUDITIONS to 2333 for Globe and 2333 for Smart. To join the Starwood Cinema Club Cinema Loyalty and Privilege program, contact 09176778.74.

E-mail: kimmydimz@gmail.com

## Win 'American Idol' goodies!

SET OF 2000 CLUES ARE ROOTED IN YOUR think, but make sure you pay attention when you watch "American Idol" on StarWorld tonight, because INQ7 is giving away some nice, limited-edition "AmericanIdol" goodies to three fans who can answer the following questions correctly about tonight's show:

1. What will Taylor Hicks' first song be?
2. Who will be the second "American Idol" contestant to perform?
3. Who do you think will be eliminated this week?

E-mail your answers to idle with the subject: carolist_at_INQ7@yahoo.com with your complete name and contact details and get this chance to win limited time tickets to the dream-fulfilled CCA holder!

Previous winners:
1. Kat Dumlao
2. Lenka Salito
3. Sweetie Gonzales

Winners may claim their prizes at the Breakwater at 19 Sheridan St. Legaspi Village, Makati City, or they may call Ray Legaspi at 7213800 to 06.

# 'American Idol' Final 3

ELLIOTT Yamin, Katharine McPhee and Taylor Hicks

VIEWERS HAVE VOTED, AND TONIGHT'S elimination results in the toughest, final leg of the competition. Who among Taylor Hicks, Katharine McPhee and Elliott Yamin will become the next American Idol? Here's more about the season's Final 3.

Tune in to "American Idol" season five, StarWORLD, Direct. Its satellite every Wednesday and Thursday, 8 p.m., with replays at 8 and 11:30 p.m. Don't miss the excitement of the grand finale on May 24 and 25, only on Star World!

### Taylor Hicks

Age: 29
Hometown: Birmingham, AL
Audition city: Las Vegas
Favorite female artist: Cindi Lauper
Favorite male artist: Billy Joel, Joe Cocker, Bob Seger
When did you first start to sing? When I learned to speak.
Do you have any formal singing training? No.
What other talents do you have? Dancing.
If you don't make it on "American Idol," what will you do? Try to get on "Dancing with the Stars."
What album would your friends be surprised you own? "The Wiggles"
Who is your American Idol? Ray Charles
What is your definition of an American Idol? Someone very talented and humble.
Who is your favorite judge and why? Randy—he plays an instrument.

### Katharine McPhee

Age: 22
Hometown: Los Angeles, CA
Audition city: San Francisco
Favorite female artist: Whitney
Favorite male artist: Journey
When did you first start to sing? 2 years old
Do you have any formal singing training? No.
What other talents do you have? I can do funny voices and impressions.
If you don't make it on "American Idol," what will you do? I'm always close... Survivor! Of course, I'd still pursue a career in music.
What are your personal goals in life? To help educate young people about music and diabetes. I want to be an inspiration to others. I want to be a great dad someday. I want to meet Magic Johnson and have a floor hockey game.
What is your definition of an American Idol? Someone who can inspire others to accomplish anything they set their mind to do.
Who is your favorite judge and why? Simon—he doesn't sugarcoat anything.

### Elliott Yamin

Age: 27
Hometown: Richmond, VA
Audition city: Boston
Favorite female artist: Alicia Keys, Corinne Bailey Rae
Favorite male artist: Usher
When did you first start to sing? 5 years old
Do you have any formal singing training? No.
What other talents do you have? I can do funny voices and impressions.
If you don't make it on "American Idol," what will you do? I'm always close... Survivor! Of course, I'd still pursue a career in music.
What are your personal goals in life? To help educate young people about music and diabetes. I want to be an inspiration to others. I want to be a great dad someday. I want to meet Magic Johnson and have a floor hockey game.
What is your definition of an American Idol? Someone who can inspire others to accomplish anything they set their mind to do.
Who is your favorite judge and why? Simon—he doesn't sugarcoat anything.